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ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

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POPULAR FRENCH NOVELS.

A NEW LEASE OF LIFE,

AND

SAVING A DAUGHTER'S DOWRY.

BY EDMOND ABOUT.

LONDON:

VIZIALLY & Co., 10 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.

1880.



A NEW LEASE OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THEY KILL THE FATTED CALF TO CELEBRATE THE
RETURN OF A CAREFUL SON.

On the 18th of May, 1859, M. Renault, formerly a professor of physics and chemistry, but at that time a landed proprietor at Fontainebleau, and a member of the municipal council of that charming little town, posted in person the following letter directed to—

“M. Léon Renault,
“Civil Engineer,
“Post-office,
“Berlin,
“Prussia.

“My dear Son,—

“The good news you sent us from St. Petersburg gave us the greatest pleasure. Your poor mother has been an invalid all the winter, though I did not mention this before, for fear of making you anxious. I myself have not been very brisk, and a third person, whose name you may possibly guess at, has also been pining for a sight of you. But make your mind easy, dear Léon, we have all recovered our health and spirits since the date of your return has been settled.

We are now beginning to realise that the Ural mines will not engulf one dearer to us than aught else in the world. God be praised! The fortune you have so quickly and so honourably acquired will not, after all, cost you your health, if it is true that you have really grown stout in the desert, as you tell us. We shall not die without having once more embraced our son. So much the worse for you if all your affairs yonder are not fully completed, for we have all three sworn that you shall never go back. You will not find obedience a hard task, for you will be happy amongst us, at least that is Clementina's opinion—oh, I forgot, I did not mean to mention her name. Maître Bonnivet, our excellent neighbour, has not contented himself with simply investing your capital on good securities, he has also employed his leisure moments in drawing up a very touching little document which only awaits your signature. Our worthy mayor has ordered a new scarf from Paris in honour of your arrival. It is to be donned for the first time for your benefit.

“Your apartment—which will soon belong to both of you—is furnished to suit your present means. It is—but the house has been so altered within the last three years that any description would only mystify you. M. Andret, the architect of the imperial château, has superintended the work, and has insisted upon building me a laboratory worthy of Thénard or Desprez. It was useless to protest against it, and to say that I was no longer good for anything, since my celebrated treatise on the condensation of gas has never advanced any further than the fourth chapter. Your mother sided with this old scamp of a friend, and from henceforth science possesses a temple in our dwelling, a regular ‘sorcerer’s den,’ to use a graphic saying of old Gothón’s. Nothing is wanting, not even a steam engine of 4-horse power. Alas! what shall I do with it? I trust, however, all this expense will not be quite thrown away so far as

others are concerned. You are not going to sleep upon your laurels surely? Ah, if I had only had your means when I was your age! I should have devoted my days entirely to science, instead of wasting them upon a parcel of young fools, who only made use of my lectures to read Paul de Kock's novels. I should have been ambitious. I should have liked to attach my name to the discovery of some general principle, or, at the least, to the invention of some useful instrument. It is too late, now. My eyes are weary, and my brain itself refuses to work.

"Your turn now, my boy! You are only twenty-five, the Ural mines have furnished you with the means of living in comfort. You want nothing more for yourself, and the time has come to work for the good of the human race. This is the highest wish, and the most earnest hope of your old father, who loves you and awaits you with open arms.

"J. RENAULT.

"P.S.—By my reckoning, this letter ought to reach Berlin two or three days before you. You will already have seen in the papers of the 7th inst. the death of the celebrated Humboldt, an unspeakable loss to science and humanity.

"I have had the honour of writing to that great man several times during my life, and he condescended to reply to me by a letter which I have religiously kept. If you have a chance of buying some memento of him, a manuscript in his handwriting, or some trifle from his collections, you would give me great pleasure."

A month after the despatch of this letter the anxiously expected son made his appearance under the parental roof. M. and Madame Renault, who went to the station to meet him, found him taller, stouter, and improved in every respect. To say the truth, he was by no means a remarkable young man, but had a good pleasant countenance. Léon Renault.

was a type of a fair, plump, and well-made man of medium height. His large blue eyes, soft voice, and silky beard revealed a nature refined rather than powerful. A very white throat, so rounded as to be almost feminine, contrasted strangely with a tanned and weather-beaten face. His teeth were good, very small, rather curving inwards, and not at all pointed. When he took off his gloves he showed two small square hands, firm to the touch, soft enough, neither warm nor cold, neither dry nor moist, but pleasant to feel, and cared for to perfection.

Such as he was, his father and mother would not have exchanged him for the Apollo Belvedere. They embraced him, God knows, over and over again, all the while plying him with questions, which he forgot to answer. Some old friends of the family, the doctor, the architect, and the lawyer, had gone to the station with his parents; each in his turn gave him a hug, made eager inquiries after his health, and whether he had had a pleasant journey. He listened patiently and even cheerfully to this commonplace melody, the words of which were insignificant enough, but whose music went to his heart, because it came from the heart.

They had been at this about a quarter of an hour, and the train had gone off again with its long shrill whistle; the omnibuses of the various hotels had started one after the other noisily down the road which leads into the town, and the June sun shone brilliantly on this group of happy people, when Madame Renault suddenly exclaimed that the poor boy must be dying of hunger, and it was barbarous to keep him waiting so long for his dinner. In vain Léon protested that he felt less hunger than joy, and that he had breakfasted in Paris. The whole party jumped into carriages, the son by the side of his mother, the father opposite, as if he could never tire of feasting his eyes on the sight of his beloved child.

A cart followed, filled with trunks, long and narrow boxes, and all the other paraphernalia of the traveller. At the entrance of the town, the coachmen began to crack their whips, the carter followed suit, and this joyous din attracted the attention of the inhabitants, drawing them to their doors, and giving a little life to the quiet streets. Madame Renault turned from side to side, on the look-out for witnesses of her triumph, and bowed, with the utmost cordiality, to people she scarcely knew. Many a mother, only slightly acquainted with her, bowed out of sympathy. No mother is indifferent to this sort of happiness, besides which Léon's family was beloved by every one. The neighbours accosted each other with a pleasure devoid of jealousy.

"It is Renault's son," said they, "who has been working for the last three years in the Ural mines, and who has now come home to share his fortune with his old parents."

Léon also recognised some familiar faces, but not all those he had hoped to see. He leant forward for a moment and whispered in his mother's ear—"And Clementina?"

This was said so close and low, that even M. Renault could hardly tell if it were a word or a kiss. The good lady smiled tenderly, and replied by a single word—"Patience!" as if patience was quite a common virtue among lovers!

The door of the house was wide open, and old Gothon stood on the threshold, throwing up her arms and crying like a fool; for she had known little Léon when he was no higher than her knee. Another hug had to be gone through on the top of the flight of steps between the faithful old servant and her young master.

M. Renault's friends made a discreet effort to retire, but it was labour lost; they were given to understand distinctly that their places were already laid at table. When every one was assembled in the drawing-room, with the exception of the still invisible Clementina, the medallioned easy chairs

stretched out their arms to M. Renault's son ; the old mirror over the chimney-piece seemed to delight in reflecting his image ; the great crystal chandelier emitted a joyful tinkle ; the Chinese mandarins on the what-not nodded their heads in token of welcome, as if they were really household gods, and not strangers and heathens. No one knew why it began to rain kisses and tears again, but somehow it seemed like a second arrival.

"The soup is on the table," announced Gothou.

Madame Renault took her son's arm, contrary to all the rules of etiquette, and without even apologising to the decorous old friends assembled about her. And she made scarcely any excuse for helping her child before her guests. Léon let her do as she pleased, and showed his good sense. There was not a guest among them who would not have been capable of pouring the soup down his waistcoat rather than have tasted it before the new comer.

"Mother," cried Léon, spoon in hand, "this is the first time for three years that I have tasted good soup."

Madame Renault felt herself blush with delight, and Gothou immediately broke something ; they each imagined the young man said this to flatter their vanity, but he really was speaking the truth. There are two things a man rarely finds out of his own home—good soup and unselfish love.

If I were to enumerate faithfully every dish on the table, there would not be one of my readers whose mouth would not water. I even think a very delicate reader might be seized with a fit of indigestion. Besides which, very probably the list would extend to the end of the volume, and there would not be a single page left for the wonderful history of Colonel Fougas. For this reason, I think it wiser to return to the drawing-room, where coffee has already been served.

Léon hardly took half of his cup, but you must not con-

clude that the coffee was too hot, too cold, or too sweet. Nothing in the world would have prevented him drinking it to the last drop, if a knock at the street door had not suddenly re-echoed to his very heart. The moment which succeeded seemed interminable. No! never in all his travels had he known a moment so long as that one.

But at length Clementina appeared, preceded by the worthy Mademoiselle Sambuco, her aunt, and the smiling mandarins on the what-not heard the sound of three kisses! Why three? The superficial reader, who pretends to guess a thing before it is even written, has, doubtless, already found a probable explanation. •

"Surely," says he, "Léon was too respectful to kiss the worthy Mademoiselle Sambuco more than once; but when he found himself in presence of Clementina, who was so soon to be his wife, he repeated the dose, and he did quite right."

That, sir, is what I call a rash decision. The first kiss fell on the cheek of Mademoiselle Sambuco, the second was given by Mademoiselle Sambuco on Léon's left cheek, the third was a pure accident, which filled two young hearts with profound consternation.

Léon, who was very much in love with his betrothed, rushed blindly towards her, uncertain for the moment whether he should kiss her on the right cheek or the left, but quite decided on not postponing any longer a pleasure he had been promising himself since 1856. Clementina had no idea of not submitting, but only thinking as to which of Léon's cheeks, the right or the left, should be pressed by her lovely lips. The precipitation of both young people was the cause that neither Léon's nor Clementina's cheeks received the offering destined for them. And the mandarins on the what-not, who had been reckoning on hearing two kisses, only heard one. Léon was astounded, and Clementina blushed up to the eyes, and the betrothed pair fell back a step and

contemplated the flowers on the carpet, whose pattern over after remained indelibly engraved on their memory.

Clementina was, in Léon's eyes, the prettiest person in the world. He had loved her for more than three years, and it was partly on her account he had undertaken the journey into Russia. In 1856 she was too young to marry, and too rich for a civil engineer, with only £100 a-year, to aspire to her hand. Léon, like a true mathematician, set himself the following problem:—"Given, a young girl of fifteen, with a fortune of 8,000 francs (£320) a year, and a likelihood of succeeding to the property of her aunt, say 200,000 francs more, how to make an equal fortune during a lapse of time which would allow of her growing into a young girl, without becoming an old maid." He had found the solution in the Ural copper mines.

During three long years he had corresponded indirectly with the beloved of his heart. Every letter he wrote to his father or mother was passed on to Mademoiselle Sambuco, who did not hide them from Clementina. Sometimes they were read aloud in the family circle, and M. Renault never had occasion to skip a sentence, for Léon never wrote anything a young girl might not hear. The aunt and niece lived a retired life in a small house at the end of a fine garden, and they only received old friends. Clementina, therefore, had no great merit in keeping her heart for Léon. With the exception of a big colonel of cuirassiers, who followed her sometimes in her walks, no man had ever paid her any attention.

She was really lovely though, and not only in the eyes of her lover and the Renault family, or of the inhabitants of the little town she lived in. In the provinces people are satisfied with little. They are prodigal of their title of pretty woman and fine man, not being rich enough on that score to be fastidious. It is only in capitals that absolute

merit alone claims admiration. I once heard the mayor of a village say, with a certain amount of pride: "You must own that my servant Catherine is very pretty for a village of five hundred souls."

Clementina was pretty enough to be admired in a city of eight hundred thousand inhabitants. Picture to yourself a fair little creole, with black eyes, a dead white complexion, and dazzling teeth. Her figure was round and lithe as a willow. What lovely hands she had, and what pretty Andalusian feet, arched and curved as Cupid's bow! Every glance of hers was a smile, every movement a caress. Added to which, she was neither silly nor shy, nor even ignorant of things in general, like a little girl brought up in a convent.

Her education, began by her mother, had been completed by two or three respectable old professors, chosen by M. Renault, her guardian. She had good judgment, and a well-cultivated mind. But really, I don't know why I am writing in the past tense, when she is still living, thank heaven! with all her perfections as fresh as ever.

CHAPTER II.

UNPACKING BY CANDLELIGHT.

TOWARDS ten o'clock Mademoiselle Virginie Sambuco declared it was time to think of retiring. These ladies lived with almost monastic regularity. Léon protested, but Clementina obeyed, though not without a little pout of dissatisfaction.

The drawing-room door was already open, and the old lady had taken up her hood from the ante-room, when the engineer, struck by a sudden idea, exclaimed—"You surely will

not go away without helping me to unpack my boxes. It is a kindness I beg of you, my dear Mademoiselle Sambuco."

The excellent old maid hesitated. Habit bid her to go, good-nature bid her stay; a grain of curiosity kicked the beam.

"I am so glad!" said Clementina, hanging up her aunt's hood again on the hat stand.

Madame Renault did not know as yet where Léon's luggage had been placed, but Gothou informed them that "everything had been thrown down anyhow in the 'sorcerer's den,' until Monsieur Léon should decide what he required to be taken up to his room." The whole party, therefore, adjourned with lamps and candles to a large apartment on the ground floor, where furnaces, retorts, instruments of physical science, boxes, trunks, carpet bags, hat-boxes, and the famous steam engine combined to make a charming picture of confusion.

The light played upon this interior in the style of some picture of the Dutch school. It glided over the yellow cylinders of the electric machine, rebounded on the glass retorts, fell full on two silver reflectors, and rested while passing upon a splendid barometer by Fortin. The Renaults and their friends, grouped in the midst of the luggage—some seated, some standing, one holding a lamp, and another carrying a wax candle, detracted nothing from the picturesque weirdness of the scene.

Léon, armed with a bunch of small keys, opened the trunks one after the other. Clementina, seated opposite to him on a large oblong box, was watching him with eyes of affection rather than of curiosity. They began by putting on one side two immense square cases, only containing specimens of mineralogy, after which they passed in review all the different treasures the engineer had distributed amongst his clothes and linen.

A pleasant perfume of Russia leather, caravan tea, Levant tobacco, and attar of roses, soon diffused itself through the laboratory. Léon had brought back a little of everything, according to the usual habit of rich travellers who have left a family and a large circle of friends at home. He brought to light, one after the other, fabrics from Asiatic looms, narghiles of fretted silver from Persia, chests of tea, sherbets flavoured with rose, precious essences, golden tissues from Tarjok, antique arms, a service of oxidised silver from the manufactory of Toula, precious stones in Russian setting, bracelets from the Caucasus, necklaces of clouded amber, and a leather bag filled with those turquoises which are sold at the fair of Nijni Novgorod.

Each object passed from hand to hand in the midst of questions, explanations and interjections of every kind. All the friends who were there received the presents that had been destined for them. It was a kind of concert of polite refusals, friendly insistence, and thanks returned in every tone of the *gamut*. Needless to say the lion's share fell to Clementina, who did not make any difficulty about accepting, for as matters stood, all these pretty things were only so many wedding gifts and would not go out of the family. Léon had brought his father a very handsome dressing-gown of some brocaded gold fabric, some old books picked up at Moscow, a pretty picture by Greuse he had come across accidentally in a miserable little shop in the Gastinitvor, two beautiful specimens of rock crystal, and one of Humboldt's walking sticks!

"You see," cried he, putting this historical cane into M. Renault's hands, "the postscript of your last letter did not fall on barren soil."

The old professor received this present with visible emotion. "I shall never use it," said he to his son. "The Napoleon of science has held it in his hand, and what would

be thought of an old sergeant like myself, were he to carry it out in his forest rambles. And the collections—you were not able to buy anything? Were they sold very dear?"

"They were not sold at all," replied Léon. "Everything was placed in the National Museum at Berlin. But in my anxiety to please you, I allowed myself to be robbed in a strange manner. The very day of my arrival, I imparted your wish to the commissionaire who accompanied me, and he swore that a little jew broker, a friend of his, of the name of Ritter, had a wonderful anatomical relic to dispose of which had belonged to the legatées. I rushed off to see this jew, examined the mummy—for it was one—and paid down, without bargaining, the price he asked for it. But the next day a friend of Humboldt's, Professor Hirtz, related to me the history of this fragment of humanity, which had been lying in the shop for the last ten years, and after all had never belonged to Humboldt. Where the deuce can Gothon have hidden it? Ah, Mademoiselle Clementina is seated upon it."

Clementina wished to rise, but Léon begged her to remain seated. "We have plenty of time," said he, "to look at that old rubbish, and besides, as you may imagine, it is not a very lively object. This is the story Professor Hirtz told me, and for the matter of that, he has promised to send me a copy of a rather curious memoir on the subject. You are not going yet, my dear Mademoiselle Sambuco. It is a little scientific and military romance. We will look at the mummy after I have told you the history of all his misfortunes."

"Aha!" cried M. Audret, the architect of the château, "so you are going to give us the romance of the mummy? Too late, my dear Léon: Théophile Gautier has been beforehand with you, in the *feuilleton* of the 'Moniteur,' and every one knows the story of your Egyptian."

"My story," replied Léon, "is no more Egyptian than that of Manon Lescaut. Our good Doctor Martout, here present, ought to be acquainted with the name of Professor John Meiser, of Dantzic, who lived at the beginning of the century, and whose last works date, I fancy, from 1824 or 1825."

"From 1823," replied M. Martout. "Meiser is one of those learned men who have done the most credit to Germany. In the midst of the sanguinary wars which desolated his country, he carried on the researches of Leewenckock, Baker, Needham, Fontana, and of Spallanzani, in the revivification of animals. Our school reveres in him one of the fathers of modern biology."

"Heavens! What dreadful hard words," cried Mademoiselle Sambuco. "Is it allowable to detain people till this time of the night to make them listen to German?"

Clementina tried to soothe her. "Don't listen to the long words, my dear little auntie. Keep your attention for the romance, since there is one."

"A terrible one," said Léon. Mademoiselle Clementina is seated on the body of a human victim, immolated in the cause of science by Professor Meiser."

This time Clementina jumped up in great haste, and her lover, offering her a chair, seated himself in the place she had just vacated. The audience, fearing that Léon's romance might be in several volumes, seated themselves around him, some on boxes, and others in chairs.

CHAPTER III.

THE CRIME OF THE LEARNED PROFESSOR MEISER.

"LADIES," said Léon, "Professor Meiser was not a common malefactor, but a man devoted to science and humanity. If he did kill the French colonel, who reposes at this moment under my coat tails, it was, in the first place, to preserve his life, and afterwards to clear up a question which must interest all of you in the very highest degree.

"The duration of our life is infinitely too short; that is a fact no man can deny. To think that a hundred years hence not one of the ten or twelve persons here assembled will remain on the surface of the earth! Is it not heartrending?"

Mademoiselle Sambuco sighed audibly, and Léon continued—

"Alas! mademoiselle, I have often sighed like you at the thought of this sad necessity. You have a niece, the loveliest and most charming of nieces, and the sight of her sweet face gladdens your heart. But you long for something more; you will never feel satisfied till you see yourself surrounded by your great nephews. And you shall see them, I trust. But will you ever see their children? That is doubtful. And their grandchildren? that is impossible. As to the tenth, twentieth, and thirtieth generation, one must not even think of them. Still, one does think of it, and there is, perhaps, hardly a man who has not said to himself, at least once in his life, 'If I could only live again two hundred years hence!' One longs to return to earth and hear news of his family, another of his dynasty; the philosopher is anxious to know if

the ideas he disseminated have borne fruit ; the politician, if his party is in the ascendant ; the miser, if his heirs have dissipated the large fortune he accumulated ; the landowner, if the trees in his garden have sprung up. No one is indifferent to the destinies of this world which we pass through, as it were, by express train in the space of a few years, never to return to it. How many have envied the fate of Epaminondas, who fell asleep in a cave, and perceived, on opening his eyes, that the world had grown older. Who, indeed, has not, in his own person, indulged in dreams of the wonderful adventures of the Sleeping Beauty ?

“ Well, ladies, Professor Meiser, one of the most serious men of our day, persuaded himself that scientific power might be able to send a living being to sleep, and awaken him again at the end of an infinite number of years ; arrest all the functions of the body, suspend life, protect an individual from the wear and tear of time during a century or two, and resuscitate him afterwards.”

“ He must have been a madman ! ” exclaimed Madame Renault.

“ I would not swear to that ; but he had his own theory as to the mainspring which puts living beings into action. Do you remember, dear mother, your early impressions, when, as a little girl, you were first shown the works of a watch in motion ? You felt quite sure that, in the midst of that tiny box, there was some active little animal which never rested during the twenty-four hours in its work of turning the wheels. If the hands stopped, then you said, ‘ The little creature must be dead,’ yet it might only have been asleep. Since then, you have had it explained to you that the watch contained an assemblage of beautifully-adapted and well-oiled works, which move spontaneously and in perfect harmony. If the spring were to snap, a wheel to break, a grain of dust to insinuate itself between the pieces,

the watch would stop, and the children would have reason to exclaim, 'The little creature is dead.' But, given a strong, well-made watch, perfect in every point, and only stopped because the works want oiling, then the little creature is not dead; a drop of oil is all that is needed to awaken it.

"Here is an excellent chronometer, of London make; it goes for a fortnight without winding. I wound it up yesterday, so that it has now thirteen days to live. If I were to throw it on the ground and break the mainspring, there would be an end of it, I shall have killed the little animal. But suppose that, without breaking anything, I find means of drying up, or withdrawing the oil, which makes the works glide one over the other, will the little animal be dead then? No, it will only be asleep. And the proof is, that I can then shut my watch up in a drawer, keep it there for twenty-five years, and, by putting a tiny drop of oil into it, after a quarter of a century the works will once more be set in motion. Time would have gone by without ageing the little sleeper; it would still have the thirteen days to run from the moment it awoke.

"All living beings, according to Professor Meiser, are watches or organisms, which move, breathe, sustain themselves, and reproduce themselves, provided their works are properly oiled. The oil of a watch is represented in animal life by an immense quantity of water. In man, for example, water takes up at least four-fifths of his whole weight. Given, a colonel weighing 150lbs., there are 30lbs. of colonel, and 120lbs. or 60 quarts of water. It is a fact which has been demonstrated by numerous experiments. I say a colonel as I should say a king; all men are equal when submitted to analysis.

"Professor Meiser was convinced, like all other learned men, that to break the head of a colonel, to pierce him through the heart, or to divide his vertebral column, would

be to kill the little animal, since the brain, and the heart, and the spinal marrow are indispensable springs, without which the machine cannot go. But he also believed that by abstracting sixty quarts of water from a living body, the little animal could be made to sleep without killing it; that a colonel dessicated with great care, might be preserved for a hundred years, and, after that time, be brought back to life by giving him the necessary drop of oil, or, rather, the sixty quarts of water, without which the human frame could not be put in motion.

"This opinion, which is perhaps unacceptable to you and to myself, but which is not absolutely rejected by our friend Dr. Martout, was founded upon a series of authentic observations, which any man may still verify for himself. There are animals which come back to life. Nothing is more certain or more clearly demonstrated. Herr Meiser, following in the steps of Abbé Spallanzani, and many others, used to pick up, in the gutter of the roof, little dried-up worms as brittle as glass, which he brought back to life by plunging them into water.

"The faculty of resurrection is not peculiar to one species; it has been found among many and divers animals. Volvula, the small eels, or anguillula, found in vinegar, mud, stale paste, and smutted wheat; rotifera, which are little shrimps protected by a shell, provided with a complete intestinal organ of different sexes, possessing a nervous system, with a separate brain, one or two eyes, according to the species, a crystalline and an optic nerve; tardigrades, which are little spiders with six or eight legs, of separate sexes, complete tissues, a mouth, two eyes, a distinct nervous system, and a well-developed muscular system. All these die and come to life again ten or fifteen times consecutively, according to the pleasure of the naturalist. He dessicates a rotifer—farewell, my friend! he soaks it—good day to you!

Everything depends upon being very careful of it when it is dried. You can understand that if you were just to break off his head, no drop of water, nor river, nor ocean could bring him to life again.

"The most wonderful thing is that an animal only capable of living a year, like the *anguillula* of mildewed wheat, can remain twenty-eight years without dying, if you only take the precaution to dry it. Needham had collected a quantity in 1743, which he presented to Martin Folkes, who gave them in turn to Baker, and these interesting animals came to life again in 1771. They enjoyed the unusual felicity of elbowing their twenty-eighth generation! A man who should see his twenty-eighth generation would be a happy grandfather—eh?

"Another fact not less interesting is that all dessicated animals are more tenacious of life than others. If the temperature were suddenly to fall thirty degrees in the laboratory where we are now assembled, we should very probably all be laid up with a cold on the chest. If it were to rise in the same proportion, we might look out for brain fever; well, a dried animal, which is not really dead, but will resuscitate to-morrow if placed in water, can bear with impunity a variation of ninety-five degrees. Herr Meiser and others have proved it.

"It now remains to be proved if a superior animal, a man for instance, can be dessicated without any more inconvenience than a worm or a *tardigrado*. Professor Meiser was convinced of it; he has said so in all his works, but he has not demonstrated it by experiment. What a misfortune, ladies! Any man, curious as to the future, discontented with the present, or at variance with his contemporaries, might reserve himself for another and better century, and there would be an end to all misanthropic suicides! Invalids that the science of the nineteenth century in its ignorance had

declared incurable, would not need to blow out their brains ; they would quietly allow themselves to be dried up, and would wait patiently at the bottom of a box till some doctor had found a cure for their complaints. Rejected lovers would no longer throw themselves into the river, but would lie down under the bell of a pneumatic machine, and we should see them thirty years after, young, handsome, and triumphant, mocking at their cruel, faded fair ones, and returning them scorn for scorn.

“ Nations would abandon the unseemly and barbarous custom of guillotining dangerous men. They would not shut them up in a cell at Mazas to finish the work of demoralisation ; they need not send them to Toulon to perfect their criminal education ; they would dry them up in batches, some for ten years, and some for forty, according to the measure of their iniquities. An ordinary warehouse would take the place of prisons, lunatic asylums, and the hulks. No more escapes to guard against, no more prisoners to feed. An enormous quantity of dried beans and mouldy potatoes would then be available for the use of the country !

“ This, ladies, is a feeble specimen of the benefits Professor Meiser hoped to spread over Europe, when he inaugurated the dessication of man. He made his great experiment in 1813, on a French colonel, a prisoner they say, sentenced to death by court-martial as a spy. Unfortunately it did not succeed, for I bought the colonel and his box for the price of an ordinary cavalry horse, in the very filthiest hole in Berlin.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE VICTIM.

"MY dear Léon," said M. Renault, "all this reminds me of a distribution of prizes. We have been listening to your dissertation as we should have listened to the Latin oration of the professor of rhetoric; there is always amongst the audience a majority who learn nothing from it, and a minority who understand nothing of it. But every one listens patiently all the same, on account of the sensation to follow. Dr. Martout and I know the works of Professor Meiser and his worthy pupil, M. Pouchet. You have, therefore, said too much if you have been speaking for our benefit, and too little for these ladies and gentlemen, who know nothing of the discussions dependent upon vitality and organism. Is life a principle of action which animates the organs and sets them in play? Is it not, on the contrary, the result of organisation, the action of certain properties of organised nature? This is a problem of the highest importance, which would interest even women themselves if it were placed boldly before them. It would be enough to say to them, 'We are trying to find out if there is really a vital principle, the beginning and source of all the acts of the body; or if life is only the result of the regular action of the organs. According to Meiser and his school, there is no vital principle; if it really existed, they say, it would be incomprehensible that it should depart from a man and a tardigrade when they are dried up, and return to them when they are moistened again.' But if there is no vital principle, all the metaphysical and

moral theories which have been based upon its existence must be reconstructed.' These ladies have listened very patiently; it is only due to them to say so, and all they can have understood from this rather unintelligible discourse is, that instead of the romance you promised them, you have given them a long dissertation. But you shall be forgiven for the sake of the mummy you are going to show to us, so open the colonel's box."

"We richly deserve it," cried Clementina, laughing.

"Suppose you should be afraid?"

"I? Know, sir, I am afraid of nobody, not even of live colonels."

Léon took up his bunch of keys, and opened the long oak box upon which he had been seated. The lid once raised, there appeared a large loaden coffer, which contained a magnificent box of walnut wood, beautifully polished outside, and lined with quilted white satin in the interior. The company approached with their lamps and wax lights, and the colonel of the 23rd appeared to them as if he were lying in state.

You would have said he was asleep; the perfect preservation of his body bore witness to the paternal care of his executioner. It was really a most remarkable production, which might have competed with any of the most perfect mummies in Europe, described by Vicq d'Azyr in 1779, or by the younger Puymaurin, 1787. The face was, as usual, in better preservation than the rest of the body, the features having retained their proud and manly expression. Had any old friend of the colonel's been present at the opening of the third case, he would have recognised him at a glance.

Perhaps the tip of the nose was a little sharpened, the nostrils thinner and less distended, and the cartilage less raised than in 1813. The eyelids were more sunken, the lips pinched, the corners of the mouth slightly drawn down,

the cheek bones standing out too prominently ; the neck was visibly shrunk, which exaggerated the prominence of the chin and larynx. But the eyes, shut without any contraction, were much less hollow than would have been expected ; the mouth did not grin, like the mouth of a corpse ; the skin, slightly wrinkled, had not changed colour, it had only become a little more transparent, and, as it were, revealed the colour of the muscles, the fat and the tendons underneath. It had even a rosy tint, which you do not usually see in the flesh of mummified bodies. Dr. Martout explained this, by saying that, if Colonel Fougas had been dessicated alive, the globules of blood would not decompose themselves, but simply become agglutinated in the capillary vessels of the dermis, and the sub-adjacent tissues ; that they had, therefore, retained their colour, and showed it more clearly than before, thanks to the semi-transparency of the dried skin.

The uniform had become very much too large—that is easily understood—but it did not seem, at first sight, as if the limbs were in any way altered. The hands were dry and angular, but the nails, though a little curved towards the ends, had preserved all their freshness. The only very noticeable change was in the extreme depression of the abdominal walls, which seemed pressed back under the lower ribs ; on the right, a slight projection showed the position of the liver. The contact of the finger on any part of the body produced a sound like tapping on dry leather.

While Léon was describing all these details to his audience, and doing the honours of his mummy, he awkwardly tore the lobe of the right ear, and a little piece of the colonel remained in his hand. This trifling accident might not have attracted any attention, if Clementina, who had watched every movement of her lover with visible emotion, had not let her candle fall with a cry of horror. Every one rushed

towards her. Léon took her in his arms and placed her on a chair, M. Renault ran to fetch some salts. She was as pale as death, and seemed on the point of fainting. By-and-by she recovered her strength and reassured them all with a charming smile.

"Forgive me," said she, "such a ridiculous exhibition of terror; but after what Léon had been telling us—and then—that apparently sleeping figure—it seemed to me as if the poor man were going to open his mouth, and cry out that he was being hurt."

Léon hastened to shut down the lid of the box, while Dr. Martout picked up the fragment of the ear, and put it in his pocket. Clementina, though smiling all the while, and doing her best to apologise, was again seized with another fit of emotion and burst into tears. The engineer threw himself at her feet, and with many excuses and kind words, did his utmost to soothe this inexplicable grief. Clementina dried her tears, then began to cry again more than ever; and sobbed in a heartrending manner without apparently knowing why.

"Fool that I am," cried Léon, tearing his hair, "the very day I see her again after an absence of three years, can I find nothing more amusing than to show her a mummy?" He kicked the triple coffin as he spoke, saying, "I wish that confounded colonel at the deuce."

"Oh, no," cried Clementina, bursting out again with renewed excitement, "don't curse him, Léon, he has suffered so much! Poor man, poor unfortunate man!"

Mademoiselle Sambuco felt rather ashamed; she apologised for her niece, and declared that never, since her earliest infancy, had she given way to such an excess of feeling. M. and Madame Renault, who had seen her grow up; Dr. Martout, who occupied the honorary position of her medical attendant; the architect, the lawyer, in a word, every one

present, were lost in amazement. Clementina was not over sensitive, she was not even a romantic school girl. Her youth had not been fed on Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, she did not believe in ghosts, and would find her way about the house at ten o'clock at night without a candle. Some months before Léon's departure, when her mother died, she would allow no one to share with her the melancholy privilege of praying and watching in the chamber of the dead.

"This will teach us," said her aunt, "to stay up till past ten o'clock at night. What am I saying? why it is near midnight; come my child, you are more likely to recover yourself in bed."

Clementina rose submissively, but when she was about to leave the laboratory, she retraced her steps, and by a whim even more unaccountable than her distress, insisted upon looking once more on the face of the colonel. It was in vain her aunt scolded her; in spite of all opposition on the part of Mademoiselle Sambuco and the others she reopened the walnut wood case, and kneeling down before the mummy, kissed it on the brow.

"Poor man," said she as she arose, "how cold he is. Léon, promise me, if he be dead, that you will have him interred in consecrated ground."

"As you please, mademoiselle; I had intended with my father's consent, sending him to the Anthropological Museum, but, as you know, we can refuse you nothing."

When they separated, the company did not feel half so gay as when they met. M. Renault and his son saw Mademoiselle Sambuco and Clementina as far as their door, and met the big colonel of cuirassiers, who honoured Clementina with his attentions. The young girl pressed her lover's arm tenderly, saying, "That man never passes me without sighing—and what sighs, good heavens! Two of them would be enough to fill the sails of a vessel! Confess that the race of

colonels has greatly degenerated since 1813, there are none to be seen now so distinguished looking as our poor friend."

Léon assented to anything she pleased, but he could not quite see how he had become the friend of a mummy, which he had bought for twenty-five louis. To change the conversation, he said to Clementina, "I have not yet shown you the most valuable thing I brought back with me. The Emperor of All the Russias made me a present of a little gold enamelled star to be worn hanging from a ribbon. Do you admire the ribbons that are worn in the button-hole?"

"Oh, yes," replied Clementina, "the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour. Did you not notice the poor colonel has still a shred of it hanging to his uniform, but the cross is no longer there. Those wicked Germans must have torn it off when they made him prisoner."

"It's very likely," said Léon.

As they had then got to the door of Mademoiselle Sambucco's house, they were obliged to separate. Clementina held out her hand to Léon, who would have much preferred her cheek. The father and son strolled slowly home, arm in arm, full of endless conjecture as to the cause of Clementina's strange emotion.

Madame Renault was waiting to conduct her son to his bedroom, an old and touching habit that mothers don't easily forget. She showed him the spacious apartment which had been arranged for his future occupation over the drawing-room and M. Renault's study. "You will be in clover here," said she. "All the furniture is soft, round, and without angles. A blind man could find his way about without fear of hurting himself. This is what I understand by a comfortable interior, every arm-chair should be a friend. It has cost money. Penon Brothers came expressly from Paris to arrange it, but it is good for a man to find himself so comfortable in his own home, as never to feel tempted to leave it."

This kindly maternal chatter lasted two hours, and, as may be supposed, they talked much of Clementina. Léon found her handsomer than his fondest dreams had ever imagined, but less loving. "Hang it all," said he, blowing out his candle, "one would imagine that confounded stuffed colonel had thrust himself between us."

CHAPTER V.

DREAMS OF LOVE AND OF OTHER THINGS.

LÉON soon learnt, to his cost, that it does not suffice to have a good conscience and a soft bed to ensure a sound sleep. He was lodged like a Sybarite, innocent as an Arcadian shepherd, and, in addition, tired as a soldier after a forced march. Notwithstanding all this, sleeplessness took possession of him till morning. In vain he turned and re-turned in every direction, as if to throw the burden from one shoulder to the other; he did not even close his eyes till he had seen the first rays of the morning sun peep through the window shutters.

At last he fell asleep, thinking of Clementina, and a delicious dream brought before him the form of his betrothed in her wedding dress, in the chapel of the imperial château. She was leaning on the arm of M. Renault, who had apparently put on spurs for the occasion. Léon was following them, with Mademoiselle Sambuco on his arm; the old lady was decorated with the Legion of Honour. Approaching the altar, the bridegroom perceived that his father's legs had become as thin as two drum-sticks, and just as he was going to express his astonishment, M. Renault turned round and said: "They are thin because they are dry, but they are not

deformed." Whilst he was volunteering this piece of information, his countenance changed, his features took another form, a black moustache made its appearance, and he bore a strange resemblance to the colonel.

The ceremony began—the back of the choir was filled with tardigrades and rotifera as big as men, and attired as choristers; they sang in a solemn measure a hymn composed by a German called Meiser, which began thus—

"The vital principle
Is a gratuitous hypothesis."

The poetry and the music appeared admirable to Léon. He was trying to fix them in his memory when the officiating priest advanced towards him, holding out two gold rings on a silver plate. This priest was a colonel of cuirassiers in full uniform. Léon asked himself where and how he had met him; it was the evening before, at the door of Clementina's house.

The colonel murmured these words: "The race of colonels has sadly degenerated since 1813." He heaved a great sigh, and the nave of the chapel, which was a line of battle ship, was suddenly driven across the seas, at the rate of fourteen knots an hour.

Léon calmly took the little gold ring, and was going to place it on the finger of his betrothed, when he perceived that Clementina's hand was dried up; the nails alone retaining the original freshness. He was seized with terror, and fled through the church, which he found filled with colonels of every age and every branch of the service. The crowd was so dense that he had to use superhuman efforts to make his way through it.

At last he escapes; then he hears behind him the rapid steps of a man trying to overtake him. He quickens his pace, throws himself on all fours, gallops, neighs, the trees

by the road-side seem to fly before him; he does not touch the ground. But the enemy approaches, swift as the wind. He can hear the sound of his footsteps, and the clank of his spurs. Now he has overtaken Léon. He seizes him by the mane, and with one bound springs on his back, and digs his spurs into his sides. Léon rears. The horseman bends over towards his ear, and while tickling him with his whip, says—"I am not heavy to carry, only thirty pounds of colonel!"

Clementina's unhappy lover makes a violent effort; throws himself to one side; the colonel falls off, and draws his sword. Léon no longer hesitates; he puts himself on guard, crosses weapons with his adversary, and almost immediately feels the colonel's sword thrust through his heart, up to the hilt. The chill of the steel spreads further and further, till Léon is frozen from head to foot. The colonel approaches, and smilingly says, "The spring is broken, the little animal is dead." He places the body in the walnut wood case, which is too short and too narrow.

Closed in on all sides, Léon struggles like a madman, and at last wakes up—worn out with fatigue—and half stifled, between the bed and the wall! How quickly he jumped into his slippers! With what energy he opened the windows, and pushed back the outside shutters! "He made light, and saw that it was good," as we read.

Brroum! he shook off the remembrance of his dream as a dripping dog shakes off the drops of water from his coat. The famous London chronometer informed him it was nine o'clock, and a cup of chocolate, brought by Gothon, contributed not a little to clear the cobwebs from his brain. While performing his toilet, in a bright, light, and commodious dressing-room, he felt reconciled to the realities of life.

"Taking one thing with another," said he, while combing

out his fair beard, "I have hitherto had nothing but good luck. Here I am, in my native country, in the midst of my family, and in our own charming house. My father and mother are flourishing, and I enjoy robust health. Our fortune is moderate, but so are our tastes, and we shall never want. Our friends received me yesterday with open arms; we have not a single enemy. The prettiest girl in Fontainebleau has consented to become my wife; I can marry her within three weeks if I choose to hasten matters. Clementina did not greet me as if she were indifferent, far from it. Her lovely eyes beamed upon me last night with the most gracious tenderness. It is true, she ended in a flood of tears. Yes, no doubt about it. That is my only sorrow, my only anxiety, the sole cause of that ridiculous dream I had last night. She cried; and why? Because I was stupid enough to regale her with a dissertation and a mummy! Well, I will have the mummy buried; I will check my dissertations for the future, and nothing in this world shall again disturb our happiness."

He went downstairs, humming an air from the "Nozze di Figaro." M. and Madame Renault, not accustomed to sit up till midnight, were still asleep. Entering the laboratory, Léon perceived that the triple case containing the colonel had been closed; Gothou had placed upon the lid a little cross of black wood, and a sprig of consecrated box. "Be a collector!" murmured he to himself, with a semi-sceptical smile.

Just then he found that Clementina had forgotten in her trouble to take home the presents he had brought for her. He made a parcel of them, looked at his watch, and decided that there would be no indiscretion in taking a stroll as far as Mademoiselle Sambuco's house. As it happened, the respectable aunt, who was as early in her habits as people generally are in the country, had already gone out to church, and Clementina was busy gardening close by the house.

She ran to meet her lover, forgetting to throw away the little rake she had been using, and held up to him, with the prettiest smile in the world, one of her soft pink cheeks, a little moist and flushed from the exertion of gardening, and the pleasant surprise.

"You are not angry with me?" said she. "I made myself very ridiculous last night, and my aunt has been scolding me! I forgot to take away all those lovely things you brought me from the savages! It was not because I did not appreciate them. I am glad to see you used to think of me, as I always thought of you! I might have sent for them this morning, but I was determined not to do so, for my heart told me you would be sure to come yourself."

"Your heart knows me, dear Clementina."

"It would be a pity if it did not recognise its master."

"How good you are, and how I love you!"

"And I also, dear Léon, I love you so much!"

She leant the rake against a tree, and hung on the arm of her future husband with that supple and yielding grace that a creole alone possesses. "Come this way," said she. "I want to show you all the improvements we have made in the garden."

Léon admired everything she chose. The fact is he had eyes for nothing but her. The grotto of Polyphemus and the den of Cacus would have seemed to him more charming than the gardens of Armida, if Clementina's pretty pink morning wrapper had passed that way. He asked her if she would not be sorry to leave so charming a retreat which she had embellished with so much care.

"Why?" said she, without blushing. "We shall not go very far off, and, besides, can we not come here every day?"

This approaching marriage was a thing so completely settled, that they had not even mentioned it the evening before. There only remained to publish the banns, and fix

the day. Clementina, with her simple and upright mind, was able to speak without hesitation or false modesty about so natural, desirable, and likely an event. She had given her opinion to Madame Renault concerning the arrangement of the rooms, and even chosen the various hangings; and she had no idea of being coy with her future husband on the topics of that new life which they were about to commence together; of the guests to be invited to the wedding; the visits they would pay afterwards; the day to be set apart for receptions; the time they would devote to each other and to study. She inquired into Léon's occupations, and about the hours he would prefer to devote to his work. This excellent little woman would have been ashamed to bear the name of an idle man, and wretched if compelled to pass her days by the side of a do-nothing. She promised beforehand to respect Léon's work as a sacred duty. On her side, she intended to make the most of her time, and not sit with her arms crossed. From the outset, she would superintend the housekeeping, under the direction of Madame Renault, who was beginning to find the charge of the house too much for her. And afterwards, there would be the children to nurse, to bring up, and teach. That was a noble and useful privilege she would share with no one. She would, however, send her sons to college to learn to battle with life, and to teach them early the principles of justice and equality, which form the basis of all good minds. Léon let her rattle on, or only interrupted to agree with her, for these two young people, brought up for each other and fostered in the same ideas, saw with each other's eyes. Education first, then love, had created this sweet harmony.

"Do you know," said Clementina, "I felt my heart beat fearfully yesterday, as I entered your house?"

"If you think that my heart was not beating quite as much as yours—"

"Oh, but with me it was different. I was afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"I was afraid you might no longer be what my fancy pictured you. Only think, three years had elapsed since we bid each other farewell! I remembered perfectly what you were when you left, and my imagination helped my memory to build up the old Léon. But suppose you had not resembled the picture! What should I have felt in the presence of a new Léon? I, who had grown to love the other one so much!"

"You make me shudder; but our first meeting put me quite at my ease."

"Silence, sir! Don't let us talk of that. You will make me blush a second time. Let us rather talk of the poor colonel who made me shed so many tears. How is he this morning?"

"I forgot to ask him the question, but if you wish—"

"Oh, no matter! You can promise him a visit from me to-day. I must absolutely see him in broad daylight."

"It would be better for you to give up this fancy. Why expose yourself to such painful emotion?"

"I cannot help it. Seriously, my dear Léon, the old man has an attraction for me."

"Why old man? He looks like a man deceased between twenty-five and thirty years of age."

"Are you sure that he is dead? I said old man because of a dream I had last night."

"What, you also?"

"Yes, do you remember how agitated I was when I left you? I had had a scolding from my aunt, and then all kinds of terrible things came into my mind. My poor mother lying on her death-bed—in fact, I was painfully impressed."

"Poor little sweetheart."

"However, as I was determined not to dwell on these

things, I got into bed quickly, and shut my eyes as tight as I could ; so well, indeed, that I fell asleep. Before very long, I saw the colonel again ; he was lying as I had seen him, in his triple coffin, but he had long white hair, and the most benign and venerable countenance. He implored us to lay him in consecrated ground, and we carried him between us to the cemetery at Fontainebleau. When we got to my mother's tomb the stone had been removed, and my mother, dressed in white at the bottom of the vault, had placed herself so as to make room by her side for the colonel, whom she seemed to expect ; but every time we tried to lower the coffin, it slipped from our hands, and remained suspended in the air, as if it weighed nothing. I could distinguish the features of the poor old man, for his threefold prison had become as transparent as the alabaster lamp that hangs in my room. He looked sad, and his torn ear was bleeding profusely. All of a sudden he escaped from our hands, the coffin vanished, and I saw nothing but himself, pale as a statue, and tall as one of the big oaks of the lower Bréau. His gold epaulets lengthened themselves out into wings, and he flew up into heaven, blessing us with outstretched hands. I awoke bathed in tears, but I have not told my aunt of that dream, or she would have scolded me again."

"I am the person who deserves scolding, dear Clementina ; it is my fault that your sweet slumbers were disturbed by visions of another world. We will soon put a stop to all this, and this very day I am going to look out for a permanent resting-place for the colonel."

CHAPTER VI.

A YOUNG GIRL'S WHIM.

CLEMENTINA possessed a fresh young heart. Before she knew Léon she had loved but one creature in the world—her mother. Neither cousin, nor uncles, nor aunts, nor grandfathers or grandmothers had divided amongst them the small store of affection which well-born children bring with them into the world.

Her grandmother, Clementina Pichon, who was married at Nancy, in the month of January, 1814, died three months later in the precincts of Toulon during her first confinement. M. Langovin, military deputy commissary of the first class, thus left a widower, with an infant in the cradle, devoted himself entirely to the bringing up of this child.

In 1835 he bestowed her upon a worthy and charming man, M. Sambuco, Italian by origin, but born in France, and solicitor-general at the Marseilles tribunal. In 1838, M. Sambuco, who allowed himself a certain independence of ideas, because he had a certain independence of means, incurred, in a manner highly creditable to himself, the ill-will of the keeper of the seals. He was named attorney-general at Martinique, and, after some hesitation, accepted this honourable dismissal into banishment. But old Langevin was not so easily consoled for the absence of his daughter; he died two years later, without having seen little Clementina, who was to have been his god-child.

M. Sambuco, his son-in-law, perished in 1843, in an earth-

quake. The newspapers of the colony and of the metropolis were full, at that time, of the gallant way in which he had fallen a victim to his self-devotion. After this fearful catastrophe, his young widow lost no time in re-crossing the seas with her child. She settled at Fontainebleau because she thought the air good, and likely to suit her darling. Fontainebleau is one of the healthiest towns in France.

If Madame Sambuco had been as good a financier as she was a good mother, she might have left Clementina a handsome fortune; but she managed her affairs badly, and got into great difficulties. A certain lawyer in the neighbourhood robbed her of a large sum of money, and two farms, for which she paid a considerable price, made no return. At last, she did not know where to turn, and was beginning to lose her head, when a sister of her husband's, a prim and pious old maid, expressed a wish to live with her and join their incomes.

The arrival of this old lady, with her long teeth, frightened little Clementina, who hid herself behind the furniture, or clung to her mother's skirts; but it was the salvation of the house. Mademoiselle Sambuco was not one of the wisest or most demonstrative of women, but she was the personification of order. She reduced the expenditure, received all the funds herself; sold the two farms in 1847, invested in the 3 per cents. in 1848, and established a steady equilibrium in the budget. Thanks to the talents of this female steward, the sweet and improvident widow had nothing to do but to pet her child. Clementina learnt to respect the virtues of her aunt, but she adored her mother. When she had the misfortune to lose her, she saw herself alone in the world, leaning on Mademoiselle Sambuco like a young plant tied to a dry stick for support.

It was then that her friendship for Léon took a vague colouring of love. The son of M. Renault soon reaped the

benefit of the necessity for expansion which overflowed this young heart. During the three long years that Léon passed away from her, Clementina hardly felt herself alone. She loved, and she knew she was beloved in return ; she had faith in the future ; she lived in her inner feelings, and this noble and refined heart asked for nothing more.

But what greatly astonished her lover, her aunt, and herself—what strangely upsets all recognised theories upon the female heart, and reason would refuse to believe if the facts were not there to prove it—was that the very day she had seen once more the husband of her choice—an hour after she had thrown herself into Léon's arms with such frank delight—Clementina felt her whole soul invaded by a new sentiment, which was neither love, nor friendship, nor fear, but which overpowered all these, and took possession of her heart.

From the moment Léon had shown her the colonel's face she was inspired by a mad passion for this unknown mummy. It was nothing at all like what she felt for Léon, but was a mixture of compassion and respectful sympathy. If any one had related to her some noble deed of valour, some romantic story, of which the colonel had been the hero, this impression might easily have been accounted for and understood. But no ; she knew absolutely nothing of him, excepting that he had been condemned as a spy by court-martial, and yet it was of him she dreamt the very night of Léon's return.

This incredible prepossession first showed itself under a religious form. She had a mass said for the repose of the colonel's soul, urged Léon to see about the funeral, and she herself chose the piece of ground where he was to be laid. All these cares did not prevent her from paying her daily visit to the walnut-wood case, nor kneeling by the dead, and each day imprinting a sisterly or filial kiss on his forehead. The Renault family ended by being alarmed at the strange

symptoms, and did all they could to hasten the funeral, and rid themselves as soon as possible of this fascinating unknown.

But the evening before the ceremony Clementina changed her mind. What right, she asked, had they to imprison in the tomb a man who was, perhaps, not dead? The theories of the learned Dr. Meiser were not such as could be rejected without examination. The thing was worth at least a few days' reflection. Would it not be possible to submit the body of the colonel to some experiment? Professor Hirtz, of Berlin, had promised to send Léon some valuable documents bearing on the life and death of this unhappy officer; they could do nothing until these arrived; they ought to write at once to Berlin, and hasten the delivery of these papers. Léon sighed, but yielded obediently to her whim, and wrote to Herr Hirtz.

Clementina found an ally in this second campaign; it was Dr. Martout, a doctor of little reputation in his practice, and much too careless about gaining patients. M. Martout, nevertheless, was not devoid of knowledge. He had been studying for a long time five or six physiological questions, such as restoring life, spontaneous generation, and its correlates. A regular correspondence kept him informed of all modern discoveries. He was a great friend of M. Pouchet, of Rouen. He also knew the famous Karl Nibor, who has made such an important use of the microscope.

M. Martout had dried and resuscitated thousands of anguillula, rotifera and tardigrades. He believed that life was nothing more than organism in action, and saw nothing absurd in the idea of revivifying a dessicated man. He had long been meditating on this subject, when Professor Hirtz sent the following document from Berlin, the original of which is classed amongst the MSS. of the Humboldt collection.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WILL OF PROFESSOR MEISER IN FAVOUR OF THE
DESSICATED COLONEL.

"TO-DAY, the 20th of January, 1824, exhausted by a wasting illness, and feeling that my body must soon be absorbed in the great whole, I have written with my own hand this will, which is the expression of my last wish and desire.

"I appoint as my executor my nephew Nicholas Meiser, a rich brewer, residing in the city of Dantzic.

"I bequeath all my books, papers and scientific collections whatsoever, excepting item No. 3712 to my esteemed and very learned friend Herr von Humboldt.

"The whole of my other property, real and personal, valued at 100,000 Prussian thalers, or 375,000 francs, I give to Colonel Peter Victor Fougas, at present dessicated, but still living, and inscribed on my catalogue as No. 3712 (Zoology); I trust he will accept this slight compensation for the ordeals he has undergone in my laboratory, and the service he has rendered to science.

"In order that my nephew, Nicholas Meiser, should thoroughly understand the duty which I expect him to fulfil, I have decided on putting down here all the details of the dessication of Colonel Fougas, my residuary legatee.

"It was on the 11th of November, in the unhappy year 1813, that I first became acquainted with this gallant young man. I had for some time quitted Dantzic, where the roar

of cannon, and the danger of exploding shells, made work quite impossible, and I had placed myself, my instruments, and my books, under the protection of the allied armies, in the fortified village of Liebenfeld. The French garrisons of Dantzic, Stettin, Custrin, Glogau, Hamburg, and several other German towns, could hold no communication with each other, nor with their mother country; nevertheless, General Rapp was defending himself valiantly against the English fleet and the Russian army. Colonel Fougas was taken by a detachment of Barclay de Tolly's corps, as he was trying to cross the Vistula on the ice, in the direction of Dantzic. He was brought a prisoner to Liebenfeld, the 11th of November, just about my supper time, and the sub-lieutenant Garok, who commanded the village, sent for me to assist at the cross-examination, and act as interpreter.

"The open countenance, manly voice, and resolute air of this unhappy man, took my fancy. He had already offered up the sacrifice of his life. His only regret, as he said; was to have failed in sight of the goal, after having passed through four armies, and to be obliged to leave the Emperor's order unfulfilled. He seemed to be full of that French fanaticism which has done so much damage to our poor Germany, and yet somehow I could not blame him for it, and I translated his words less as an interpreter than an advocate. Unfortunately a letter from Napoleon to General Rapp, was found on him, of which I have kept a copy—

" 'Abandon Dantzic, force the blockade, unite the garrisons of Stettin, Custrin and Glogau, march upon the Elbe, arrange with St. Cyr and Davoust to concentrate the forces that are scattered at Dresden, Torgau, Wittemburg, Magdeburg and Hamburg; gather like a snowball, cross Westphalia, which is open, and come and defend the Rhine with an army of 170,000 Frenchmen which you will have saved !

" 'NAPOLÉON.'

"This letter was sent to the head-quarters of the Russian army, whilst half-a-dozen illiterate officers, drunk with joy and brandy, condemned the brave colonel of the 23rd regiment of the line to die the death of a spy, and a traitor. The execution was fixed for the next day, the 12th, and Peter Victor Fougas, after having thanked and embraced me, with the most touching expression of feeling (he is a husband and a father) found himself shut up in the little crenelated tower of Liebenfeld, where the wind blows terribly through all the loop-holes.

"The night between the 11th and 12th November was one of the most severe of this terrible winter. My self-regulating thermometer, hanging out of my window, at a south-east aspect, marked 19° centigrade below zero. I went at daybreak to take a last farewell of the colonel, and I met the sub-lieutenant Garok, who said to me in bad German—" 'There will be no need to kill the Frenchman, he is already frozen.'

"I ran to the prison ; the colonel was lying on his back quite stiff. But I saw in a moment that the rigidity of his body was not that of death. The joints, though they had lost their natural suppleness, still allowed themselves to be bent and extended without much effort. The limbs, the face, the chest, all felt cold to the touch of my hand, but very differently from what I have experienced when touching a corpse.

"Knowing that he had passed many nights without sleep, and had undergone most extraordinary fatigue, I felt convinced he had fallen into the deep lethargic slumber produced by extreme cold, which, when too prolonged, weakens the circulation and the breathing to such a point that it requires the most delicate medical observation to discover the continuance of life. The pulse was imperceptible, or at any rate my fingers, benumbed by the cold, could not feel it.

My deafness (I was then in my 69th year) prevented my ascertaining by auscultation, whether the sounds of the heart still revealed the existence of those weak but sustained beats which are still audible to the ear, when the hand can no longer detect them.

"The colonel was just then in that stage of insensibility, caused by cold, when to restore a man without killing him numerous and most delicate means are necessary. In a few more hours congelation would set in, and then it would be impossible to restore life. I was in a state of great perplexity. On the one hand, I saw him dying of congelation under my eyes; on the other, I could not without assistance give him all the care he required. If I applied stimulants without at the same time having the trunk and limbs rubbed by three or four pairs of hands, I should only awake him to see him die. I still had before my eyes the spectacle of a young and lovely girl, who had been suffocated in a fire, and whom I was able to re-animate by placing hot embers under the collar bone, but who was only just able to ask for her mother, and died instantaneously, notwithstanding the use of stimulants taken inwardly, and the application of electricity, to regulate the contractions of the diaphragm and the heart.

"And even supposing I were able to bring him back to life and strength, was he not a prisoner condemned to death by court-martial? Did not humanity forbid me to snatch him from a calm, akin to death, merely to deliver him over to the horrors of execution? I must also confess that in the actual presence of this organisation, in which life was held in suspension, my ideas on its resurrection took quite a new form. I had so often dried up and revived creatures of a certain status in the animal-world, that I had no doubts as to the success of the operation, even upon a human being. Acting alone I could not restore and save the colonel, but in

my laboratory I had all the necessary appliances for dessicating him without assistance.

"To resume, three courses were then open to me: 1st, to leave the colonel in the tower, where he would perish from cold; 2nd, to re-animate him by stimulants at the risk of killing him, and for what purpose? Why, merely to deliver him up in the event of success to an inevitable death; 3rd, to dessicate him in my laboratory with the almost certainty of resuscitating him when peace was proclaimed. Every friend of humanity will understand that I did not hesitate very long.

"I sent for the sub-lieutenant Garok, and requested him to sell me the colonel's body. It was not the first time I had bought a corpse for dissection, and my request excited no suspicion. The bargain made, I presented four bottles of kirsch, and soon two Russian soldiers brought me the body of Colonel Fongas on a stretcher.

"As soon as I found myself alone with the colonel, I pricked his finger, and pressure made a drop of blood ooze out. To place it under a microscope, between two thin plates of glass, was the work of a moment. Oh, happiness, the fibrin was not coagulated! The red globules appeared clearly defined, circular, flat, biconcave without indentations or crena, or any spheroidal swellings. The white globules alternately changed, and then resumed their spherical form to undergo a fresh and gradual alteration by the most delicate expansions of shape. I had not been mistaken; it was really a benumbed, but not a dead, man who lay before me! I put him in the scales; he weighed a hundred and forty pounds, clothing included! I took good care not to undress him, for I had often noticed that animals dried up in direct contact with the air died much oftener than those which remained covered with moss and other soft substances during the experiment of dessication.

"My great air pump, with its immense stand and its

enormous wrought-iron receiver, which a chain running through a pulley fixed solidly to the ceiling, was able to raise and lower without difficulty, thanks to its windlass—all the thousand and one mechanisms that I had so laboriously collected, notwithstanding the laughter of jealous rivals, and which I much regretted finding useless up to the present, were at last brought into play. Unforeseen circumstances were now to provide me with a subject for experiments, such as I had vainly tried to obtain by benumbing dogs, rabbits, sheep and other mannaifera, by the aid of refrigerant mixtures. Long since, doubtless, I should have obtained these results, if I could have had the help of those around me, instead of being the object of their raillery; if our Ministers had backed me up with their authority, instead of treating me like a revolutionary spirit.

"I shut myself up, *tête-à-tête*, with the colonel, and I forbid even old Gretchel, my housekeeper, now dead, to disturb me in my labours. I had replaced the fatiguing lever of the old air pump by a wheel furnished with an eccentric which changed the circular movement of the axis into a rectilinear movement applied to the pistons of the pump; the wheel, the eccentric, the connecting rod, the ball and socket joint of the apparatus worked admirably, and allowed me to do everything without help. The cold did not affect the play of the machine, and the lubricating oils were not thickened; I had purified them myself by a new process, founded on the then recent discoveries of the learned Frenchman, M. Chevreul.

"Having laid the body flat on the stand of the air pump, lowered the receiver, and luted the edges, I began to submit it gradually to the influence of a dry cold vacuum. Capsules, filled with chloride of calcium, were placed all round the colonel to absorb the water which would evaporate from his body, and so hasten dessication.

"I certainly found myself under the best possible conditions for bringing a human body to a state of gradual drying up, without an abrupt cessation of the functions, or disorganisation of the tissues or the humours. My experiments upon rotifera and tardigrades had rarely been attended with equal chances of success, and yet they had always come off well. But the nature of the subject, and the special scruples it imposed on my conscience, obliged me to fulfil a good many new conditions, which I had, however, long foreseen. I had taken care to arrange an opening at both ends of my oval receiver, and to fix therein a thick glass, so as to be able to follow with the eye the effect of the exhaustion of air on the colonel. I had also been scrupulously careful not to close all the windows of my laboratory, lest the lethargy of the patient should be arrested by too great a degree of heat, which might also affect the humours. If a thaw came on, my experiment was lost. But the thermometer stood steadily during several days between six and eight degrees below zero, and I was happy to find the lethargic slumber continued without having to fear the congelation of the tissues.

"I began by exhausting the air very slowly, for fear that the gases, dissolved in the blood, becoming freed by the difference of their tension with that of the rarefied air, should disengage themselves in the vessels, and immediate death ensue. Besides this, I watched without remission the effect of the vacuum on the gases of the intestines, for by dilating internally, in proportion as the pressure of air diminished around the body, they might have occasioned very serious derangements. The continued preservation of the tissues would not have been effected by this, but an internal lesion would have been sufficient to produce death after a few hours of reviviscence. It is often found so when animals have been carelessly dessicated.

"Several times a too rapid protrusion of the abdomen put me on my guard against this damage that I dreaded, and I was obliged to let in a little air under the bell. At last the cessation of all phenomena of this kind proved to me that the gases had dispersed by exosmosis, or had been expelled by the spontaneous contraction of the viscera. It was only at the end of the first day that I was able to do without these minute precautions, and to carry the exhaustion to a still further degree.

"The next day, the 13th November, I carried it to such a pitch, that the barometer fell to five millimetres. As it had produced no change in the position of the body or the limbs, I felt sure no convulsion had been produced. The colonel was gradually drying up, was being brought to a state of immobility, was losing the power of being able to perform any of the acts of life, and that without death having overtaken him, or the possibility of a return to such action being past ! His life was suspended, not extinguished !

"I pumped each time that an excess of vaporised water caused the barometer to rise. During the day of the 14th, the door of my laboratory was literally driven in by the Russian general, Count Trollohub, sent from head-quarters. This dignitary had been despatched in all haste to prevent the execution of the colonel, and to conduct him to the presence of the commander-in-chief. I confessed to him loyally what my conscience had inspired me to do ; I showed him the body through one of the bull's eyes of the air pump. I told him that I was delighted to have preserved a man who could furnish the liberators of my country with useful information, and I offered to resuscitate him at my own expense, if they only promised to respect his life and liberty. General Count Trollohub, a distinguished man no doubt, but of exclusively military proclivities, could not believe I was speaking in sober earnest ; he went out, hanging the door in

my face, and evidently looked upon me as a madman. I went back to my pumping, and I kept up the exhaustion at a pressure of 3 to 5 millimetres during the space of three months. I knew by experience that animals can revive after being subjected to exhaustion by rarefaction for eighty days.

"On the 12th of February, 1814, having observed that, for a month past, no modification had occurred in the shrinking of the flesh, I resolved to submit the colonel to another series of experiments, in order to be sure of a more perfect preservation by a complete dessication. I allowed the air to enter by the tap used for that purpose, then, having raised the receiver, I proceeded to finish my experiment. The body now only weighed forty-six pounds; I had, therefore, reduced it to nearly one-third of its original weight. You must understand that the clothing had not lost so much weight as the rest. Now, the body of a man contains almost four-fifths of its own weight in water, as is proved by a dessication successfully performed in a chemical stove.

"I then placed the colonel on a tray, and, having slid him gently into my large stove, I gradually raised the temperature to 75° centigrade. I did not dare go beyond this heat, for fear of altering the albumen, of rendering it insoluble, and depriving the tissues of the faculty of holding again the water necessary for the return of their functions. I had been careful to arrange a proper apparatus, so that a draught of dry air should constantly pass through the stove. This air had become dry by passing through a series of vases filled with sulphuric acid, quick lime and chloride of calcium.

"After a week passed in the stove, the general appearance of the colonel was not changed, but his weight was reduced to forty pounds, garments included. Eight more days brought no further diminution. I concluded, therefore, that the dessication was complete. I knew very well that

mummified corpses which have been for more than a century in the vaults of churches, and by weighing no more than ten pounds, but they do not become so light without a sensible alteration in their tissues.

“On the 27th of February, I myself put the colonel into the cases, which had been constructed for his reception. Since this period, that is to say, during a space of nine years and eleven months, we have never been separated. I took him with me to Dantzic; he lives in my house. I have never placed him according to his special number in my zoological collection; he lies in the guest chamber. I will take care of you myself till my latest moment, oh, Colonel Fougas, dear and unfortunate friend! But I shall not have the felicity of witnessing your restoration; I shall not participate in the sweet emotions of the warrior returning to life. Your lachrymal ducts, dry at present, but probably to be some day reanimated, will never shed the soft tears of gratitude on the breast of your aged benefactor, for you will only recover your former state on a day when I shall be no more.

“Perhaps you will be astonished that, living as I do, I have so long delayed withdrawing you from this profound sleep. Who knows if some bitter reproach may not mingle with and destroy the sweetness of the first thank-offering you may bring to my grave? Yes! I have prolonged, without doing you personally any good, an experiment of public interest. I ought to have kept to my first intention, and restored you to life after the treaty of peace was signed. But then I must have sent you back to France, when your native land was filled with the armies of my country and her allies. At least, I have spared you the sight of this spectacle, so harrowing to a spirit like yours. No doubt you would have had the consolation of seeing, in March, 1815, that fatal man for whom you perished in your noble devotion; but then, again, are you sure you might not have

been swallowed up with his fortunes in the shipwreck of Waterloo?

"For five or six years past, it has been neither your interest nor that of science which has kept me from re-animating you. It is—pardon me, colonel—it is a despicable clinging to life. The disease I suffer from, and which will soon carry me off, is hypertrophy of the heart; all violent emotions are forbidden me. If I were to undertake myself this grand operation, the progress of which I have set forth in a memorandum annexed to this will, I should die, most probably, before I had carried it out. My death would be a sad accident, which might have a bad effect on my associates, and cause the failure of your resuscitation.

"But take courage; you will not have long to wait, and, after all, what do you lose by waiting? You are not growing any older: you always remain twenty-four years of age. Your children are growing up; when you return to the world you will almost be their contemporary! You were poor when you came to Liebenfeld, here, in my house at Dantzic, you continue poor; but my will makes you rich. Be happy also, that is my earnest prayer!

"I beg my nephew, Nicholas Meiser, on the day after my funeral, to assemble, by letters of convocation, ten of the most celebrated doctors in the kingdom of Prussia; to read to them my will, and the memorandum annexed thereto, and then to proceed, without further delay, in my own laboratory, to the resuscitation of Colonel Fougas—the expense of their journey, board and lodging, &c., is to be paid out of my personality. A sum of 2,000 thalers is to be devoted to the publication, in German, French and Latin, of the grand results of the experiment, and a copy of this pamphlet is to be sent to each of the learned societies then existing in Europe.

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"If, owing to some unforeseen event, these scientific efforts

fail to animate the colonel, then all my property is to return to Nicholas Meiser, the only relation I possess.

“JOHN MEISER, M.D.”

CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING HOW NICHOLAS MEISER, NEPHEW OF JOHN MEISER,
FULFILLED HIS UNCLE'S BEQUEST.

DR. HIRTZ, of Berlin, who had copied this will himself, apologised very politely for not having sent it sooner. Business had obliged him to travel some distance from the capital. Passing through Dantzic, he had done himself the pleasure of calling on Herr Nicholas Meiser, formerly a brewer, now a wealthy landowner, with a large income, arrived at the age of sixty-six. This old man remembered perfectly well his uncle's death, and his will, but he evinced a great dislike to speak of them. Furthermore, he asseverated that after John Meiser's decease, he had assembled ten Dantzic physicians around the colonel's mummy; he even showed a statement unanimously signed by these gentlemen, attesting that a man dried up in a stove could not by any means or possibility be brought to life again.

This certificate, drawn up by the professional adversaries of the defunct professor, made no mention of the memorandum attached to the will. Nicholas Meiser swore by every oath (but not without reddening visibly) that this document, setting out the necessary proceedings to be followed for the resuscitation of the colonel, was quite unknown to himself and wife.

When asked why he had got rid of so valuable a relic as the body of M. Fougas, he said he had kept it in his house

fifteen years, with all the respect and care imaginable, but at the end of that time, beset by visions, and disturbed almost every night by the ghost of the colonel, coming and pulling him by the leg, he made up his mind to sell it for thirty thalers to an amateur at Berlin. Since he had got rid of this incubus, he had slept much better, though not quite well, for he found it impossible to forget the colonel's face.

To these details, Dr. Hirtz, physician to his royal highness the Prince Regent of Prussia, added a few words on his own account. He did not think the re-animation of a healthy man dessicated, with all proper care and precaution, was a theoretical impossibility. He was even of opinion, that the process of dessication adopted by the illustrious John Meiser was quite the best to follow. But in the present case it did not seem to him possible that Colonel Fougas should recover life, for the atmospheric influences and the variations of temperature which he had undergone during the space of forty-six years must have affected the tissues and the humours.

This was also the opinion of M. Renault and his son. To soothe, as far as possible, Clementina's excitement, they read her the last paragraph of Dr. Hirtz's letter. They kept John Meiser's will from her, as it would only have aroused fresh agitation; but her imagination never rested, though they did all they could to calm it. Clementina sought the society of Dr. Martout. She held discussions with him, and wished to see some of his experiments on the revivification of rotifera. When at home again, she thought a little of Léon, but constantly of the colonel.

The projected marriage still held good, but no one dared to mention such a thing as having the banns published. To the most tender speeches of her future husband, his young betrothed replied by a disquisition upon the vital principle; her visits to the Renaults' house were no longer to the living,

but the dead. All the arguments that were used to cure her of a chimerical hope only served to plunge her into a deep melancholy ; her lovely colour faded ; her eye lost its brightness ; undermined by a secret grief, she lost all that charming vivacity which is the effervescence of youth and happiness. The change must have been very apparent, for Mademoiselle Sambuco, who did not possess the watchful eye of a mother, saw it, and was alarmed.

M. Martout, who felt convinced that this malady of the mind would only yield to some moral influence, came in one morning to see her, and said—"My dear child, though I cannot understand why you feel such an unaccountable interest in this mummy, I have done something for it and you. I have just sent M. Nibor a little bit of the ear, which Léon broke off accidentally."

Clementina opened her large eyes.

"You don't understand me, I see," said the doctor. "The question is, to ascertain if the tissues and humours of the colonel have undergone any very great change. M. Nibor, by the aid of his microscope, will be able to enlighten us ; we may trust him, he is an infallible genius. His answer will decide for us whether we shall undertake the colonel's resuscitation, or whether nothing remains but to bury him."

"What !" exclaimed the young girl, "can you decide from so small a sample whether a man is living or dead ?"

"Dr. Nibor will require nothing more. Lay aside your anxiety during a week. When his answer arrives, I will give it you to read. I have excited the curiosity of the learned man ; he knows absolutely nothing about the fragment I am sending him. But if by chance he should say that the bit of ear belongs to a healthy subject, I shall beg him to come to Fontainebleau and assist us in restoring him to life."

This vague gleam of hope soon dissipated Clementina's

melancholy, and brought back her usual health and spirits. She once more sang, laughed and frolicked about M. Renault's house and her aunt's garden. Loving intercourse was renewed; the marriage was once more the subject of conversation, and the first bann was published.

"At last," said Léon, "she is restored to me."

But Madame Renault, the wise and far-seeing mother, shook her head sadly. "All this is not quite as it should be," said she. "I don't approve of my daughter-in-law being so much engrossed with a handsome young man, though he is dried up. What will become of us when she finds out that it is impossible to re-animate him? Will not the blue devils again resume their sway? And, suppose by a miracle, they do resuscitate him, are you sure she will not end by falling in love with him? I must say it was a clever trick of yours, Léon, to buy this mummy, and what I call money well spent!"

On Sunday morning, M. Martout walked into the old professor's, crying "Victory!" This is the answer he had received from Paris—

"My dear confrère,

"I have received your letter, and the little piece of tissue, upon the nature of which you wished me to give an opinion. It did not take me long to find out what it all meant. I have done things much more difficult than this twenty times over, as an expert in medical jurisprudence.

"You might have dispensed with your orthodox formula, 'after you have made your examination through the microscope I will tell you what it is.' My microscope tells me better than you can what you have sent me; you know the form and colour of certain things: it examines into their closest construction, the reason of their being, the conditions of life and death.

"Your fragment of dried tissue, about as big as my nail,

and about as thick, after having been placed twenty-four hours under a globe, in an atmosphere saturated with water, at the temperature of the human body, became supple, although a little elastic. I was then able to dissect it, to study it like a piece of living flesh, placing under the microscope each section which appeared to me to be of a different consistency or colour.

"I found at first in the centre, a thin part, harder and more elastic than the rest, and which presented the texture and cellular structure of cartilage. It was not the cartilage of the nose, nor yet of a joint, but the fibrous cartilage of the ear. Therefore, you have sent me a piece of an ear, and it is not the lower end, the lobe which in women is pierced to admit of an ear-ring, but the top part, through which the gristle extends.

"From the inner side I detached a piece of fine skin, in which the microscope showed me a delicate epidermis, perfectly intact; a dermis not less uninjured, with little papilla, and moreover traversed by a multitude of fine human hairs. Each of these little hairs had its root planted in its follicle, and the follicle accompanied by its two little glands. I can even tell you more; these downy bristles were each from four to five millimetres long, by three to five thick, which is double the length of the delicate down which covers the feminine ear, from which I conclude that your bit of ear belongs to a man.

"Against the curved edge of the cartilage I found the delicately striated bands of the muscle of the helix so perfectly intact that one would imagine there was nothing to prevent their contracting themselves. Under the skin, and near the muscles, I found several nerve filaments, each composed of eight or ten tubes, of which the marrow was also as intact and homogenous as in nerves extracted from a living animal, or a limb that has just been amputated.

"Are you satisfied now? Do you cry mercy? Well, I have not come to the end of my budget. In the cellular tissue interposing between the cartilage and the skin, I found small arteries, and little veins whose structure was perfectly recognisable. They contained serum with globules of blood. These globules were all circular, biconcave, perfectly regular, they showed neither indentation, nor that spotted condition which characterises the blood globules belonging to a corpse.

"In short, my dear confrère, I discovered in this fragment a little of everything that is found in the human subject, cartilage, muscle, nerve, skin, hair, glands, blood and everything in a normal state of perfect health. Therefore you do not send me a fragment from a corpse, but from the body of a living man whose tissues and humours are in no way decomposed.—Yours, &c.,

"KARL NIBOR.

"Paris, July 30th, 1859."

CHAPTER IX.

A GREAT SENSATION IN FONTAINEBLEAU.

It was soon hinted abroad in the town that Dr. Martout and the two Renaults intended to resuscitate a man, aided by several learned professors from Paris.

Dr. Martout had sent a detailed account to the celebrated Karl Nibor, who lost no time in communicating with the Biological Society. A commission was named then and there to accompany M. Nibor to Fontainebleau. The six commissioners and a secretary agreed to leave Paris on the 15th of August, only too glad to get away from public rejoicings, and they gave notice to M. Martout to have every-

thing in readiness for making the experiment which would occupy at least three days. Some Paris newspapers announced this great event in their general news column, but the public gave very little heed to it. The solemn entry of the army of Italy at that moment exclusively pre-occupied the public mind, besides which French people as a rule put very little faith in miracles promised by the newspapers.

But at Fontainebleau it was quite another matter ; not only Dr. Martout and M. Renault, but also M. Audret, the architect, M. Bonnivet, the notary, and ten other big-wigs of the town had seen and touched the colonel's mummy. They had talked of it to their friends, described it to the best of their ability, and related its history. Two or three copies of Herr Meiser's will had been passed about from hand to hand. The question of reviviscence was the order of the day, and you might hear it discussed round the carp-pond as energetically as in the Academy of Sciences. Tardigrades and rotifera were the subjects of conversation even in the very market place.

It must be confessed that the resurrectionists were not in the majority ; certain professors of the college, famous for their paradoxical spirit, a few lovers of the marvellous, who had had some success in table turning, and a sprinkling of those white-moustached growlers, who believe the first Napoleon's death is a story invented by the English, formed the principal element of the gathering. M. Martout had against him not only the sceptics, but the large body of believers. The first turned him into ridicule, the others pronounced him dangerous, subversive, and inimical to the fundamental ideas which form the basis of society. The priest of a little church preached covertly against these Prometheans who aspired to usurp the privileges of heaven, but the curé of the parish, an excellent and tolerant man, did not hesitate to say in five or six different houses that the cure of so hopeless

a patient as M. Fougas would be a proof of the divine power and mercy.

The garrison of Fontainebleau was at that time composed of four squadrons of cuirassiers, and the 23d regiment of the line, which had distinguished itself at Magenta. When it was known in Colonel Fougas's old regiment that that distinguished officer might perhaps come back to this world, there was a general excitement. Every regiment has its history, and the history of the 23d had been that of Colonel Fougas from the month of February, 1811, to November, 1813. Every soldier had heard read in his barrack-room the following anecdote :—

“On the 27th August, 1813, at the battle of Dresden, the Emperor saw a French regiment at the foot of a Russian redoubt, which was pelting it with grape shot. On inquiring, he was informed that it was the 23d regiment of the line. ‘Impossible !’ he said, ‘the 23d would not remain stationary under fire, they would charge the guns which are decimating them.’ The 23d, led by Colonel Fougas, charged up the height, bayoneted the artillerymen at their guns, and took the redoubt.”

The officers and soldiers, justly proud of this memorable exploit, revered in the person of Fougas one of the elders of the regiment. The idea of his reappearing amongst them, young and living, did not seem probable to them, but at any rate it was something to possess even his body. They all agreed that he should be buried at the expense of the regiment after Dr. Martout's experiment was over ; and in order to give him a tomb worthy of his glory, they voted that each man should contribute two days' pay.

Every one who wore an epaulet visited M. Renault's laboratory, the colonel of cuirassiers came several times in the hopes of meeting Clementina. But Léon's betrothed kept away. She was happier than woman ever felt before—this

pretty little Clementina. Clouds no longer veiled the serenity of her fair brow. Free from all anxiety, her heart full of hope, she adored her beloved Léon, and told him so all day long, she herself had even hastened the publication of the banns.

"Our marriage shall take place," said she, "the day after the colonel's resuscitation. I must have him as a witness, and receive his blessing. It is the least he can do for me after all I have done for him. Just fancy if it had not been for my persistence you would have sent him to the museum of the Jardin des Plantes! I shall tell him all about it, as soon as he can hear us, and then he shall cut off your ears, sir, in his turn. Oh, how I love you, Léon!"

"But," replied Léon, "why make my happiness dependent on the result of an experiment? All the necessary formalities have been gone through, the banns published, the announcements posted, no one in the world can prevent us from marrying to-morrow, and yet you choose to wait until the 19th! What connection can there be between us and the dried-up gentleman reposing in that box? He does not belong to your house or mine. I have ransacked all the papers of your family, as far back as the sixth generation, and I can find no one of the name of Fougas. Therefore it is no grandparent we are expecting at the ceremony—who then? The scandal-mongers of Fontainebleau pretend that you have a weakness for this fetish of 1813, but I feel sure of your heart, and I hope you could never love him as much as me. In the meanwhile they call me rival of the sleeping colonel in the wood!"

"Let the fools chatter," replied Clementina, with an angelic smile. "I do not pretend to explain my affection for poor Fougas, but that I do like him very much is certain. I love him as a father, as a brother, if you prefer it, for he is nearly as young as myself. When we have resuscitated him, I shall probably love him as a son, but you won't lose anything by it, my dear

Léon, you have your own place in my heart, your very own, the very best, and no one shall take it from you, not even he!"

This lover's quarrel, which took place so often, and always wound up with a kiss, was one day interrupted by a visit from the commissary of police. The worthy functionary politely stated his name and office, and begged to see young Renault in private.

"Sir," said he, as soon as they were alone, "I am perfectly aware of all the respect due to a man of your character and position, and I hope you will not view in bad part the step which duty alone leads me to take."

Léon opened his eyes very wide, and awaited the remainder of this discourse.

"You will guess, sir," continued the commissary, "that it is a question of the burial acts. They are very strict, and allow of no exception. The authorities might shut their eyes, but the great sensation the affair has made, and the position of the deceased, not to speak of the religious question, oblige us to act—in concert with you, of course—"

Léon understood less and less, and in the end it was explained to him in a thoroughly official manner, that he ought to have the colonel's remains carried to the cemetery.

"But, sir," replied the engineer, "if you have heard of Colonel Fougas at all, you must also have been told that we do not look upon him as dead."

"Sir," said the commissary with a derisive smile, "every one is at liberty to have an opinion. But the doctor of the parish, who had the pleasure of seeing the deceased, has given in a report which would authorise immediate inhumation."

"Well, sir, if Fougas be dead, we hope to resuscitate him."

"We have already been told that, sir, but for my part I could not believe it."

"You will believe it when you have seen it, and I hope, sir, that it will not be long hence."

"Then I am to understand, sir, you are doing everything according to rule?"

"Hm?"

"I suppose that before undertaking such a thing, you have obtained some authorisation?"

"From whom?"

"Really, sir, you must admit that the resuscitation of a man is an unusual event. For my part, this is the first time I have ever heard of such a thing, and the duty of a well regulated police is to prevent anything unusual taking place."

"Come, sir, if I were to say to you, here is a man who is not dead; I have a well-grounded hope of setting him on his legs again in three days; your doctor who holds a contrary opinion is in error; would you then take upon yourself the responsibility of interring Colonel Fongas?"

"No, certainly not, heaven forbid that I should take the responsibility of anything, but nevertheless, sir, in ordering the burial of M. Fongas, I should be acting according to rule, and have the law on my side. For, after all, by what right do you undertake to resuscitate a man? In what country is resuscitation customary? What is the legal precept which authorises you to bring people back to life?"

"Do you know any law that forbids it? Everything that is not forbidden is permissible."

"In the eyes of a legist, perhaps, but the police must foresee and prevent a disturbance, and a resurrection, sir, is such an unheard of event that it would not fail to constitute a disturbance."

"You will admit, at any rate, that it would be a fortunate disturbance!"

"There is no such thing as a fortunate disturbance; consider, besides, the deceased is not a nobody. If it had been some vagabond or vagrant, one might have been more lenient,

But it is a military man, a decorated officer of rank, a man who formerly held a high position in the army. The army, sir,—we must not interfere with the army!”

“My good sir, I meddle with the army like the surgeon who heals its wounds. It is a matter of giving back a colonel to the army, and you out of a spirit of routine would deprive it of a colonel.”

“I beg of you, sir, don’t get so excited and talk so loudly, we might be overheard. Be assured that I should go hand in hand with you, in anything that you would wish to do for the grand and glorious army of my country. But have you thought of the religious question?”

“What religious question?”

“To tell you the truth, sir (and this is quite between ourselves), the rest is purely accessory, and we are now coming to the delicate point. Certain persons came to me, and made some very judicious observations. The very announcement of your project has greatly disturbed several minds. It is apprehended that the success of an experiment of this kind might give a blow to the faith, and in fact scandalise quiet souls. For if Colonel Fougas be really dead it is by the will of God. Are you not afraid, by resuscitating him, of acting contrary to the design of providence?”

“No, sir, for I know that we cannot restore Colonel Fougas to life if God wills it otherwise. He allows a man to catch a fever, but He also allows a doctor to cure him of it. God allowed a brave soldier of the Emperor to be seized by drunken Russians, condemned as a spy, frozen in a fortress, and dessicated by an old German under an air-pump. But I am also allowed to find this unfortunate in a second-hand shop, and bring him to Fontainebleau, where I examine him in company of several learned men, and we discover almost certain means of restoring him to life. All this proves one thing, that God is more just, more merciful, and more forgiv-

ing than those who make use of his name merely to excite you."

"I assure you, my dear sir, I am by no means excited. I give in because I think your reasons good, and because you are a man of some consideration in this town. I hope, besides, that you are not going to blame me for an interference, which was considered advisable. I am a functionary, sir, and what is a functionary? A man who fills some office. Suppose now that officials were to render themselves liable to lose their appointments, what would remain to France? Nothing, sir, absolutely nothing. I have the honour to wish you a very good morning!"

On the morning of the 15th of August, M. Karl Nibor made his appearance at M. Renault's with Dr. Martout, and the commission sent by the Biological Society from Paris. As it often happens in provincial towns, the appearance of the illustrious professor was a disappointment. Madame Renault expected to see him appear, if not in a magician's robes of velvet, studded with gold stars, at any rate as a venerable old man of extraordinary gravity and noble carriage.

Karl Nibor is a man of medium height, very fair and very slight. He may be forty, but you would only give him credit for thirty-five. He wears a moustache and imperial, is lively, a great talker, agreeable, and sufficiently man of the world to please the ladies. But Clementina had no opportunity of enjoying his conversation; her aunt had carried her off to Moret, with a view of sparing her the anxiety of suspense and the excitement of victory.

CHAPTER X.

HALLELUJAH.

M. NIBOR and his colleagues having gone through the conventional greetings of society, begged to be allowed to see the subject. They had little time to spare, and the experiment could not possibly take up less than three days. Léon hastened to conduct them to the laboratory, and to open the three coffins which contained the colonel.

They agreed that the face of the patient presented a favourable appearance. M. Nibor denuded the colonel of his garments, which fell to pieces like tinder, having been too much dried in Professor Meiser's stove. The body, laid bare, was pronounced healthy and intact. No one dared yet guarantee success, but every one was full of hope. After this preliminary examination, M. Renault placed his laboratory at the disposal of his guests. He offered the use of everything with a liberality which was not quite free from vain-glory.

In case the aid of electricity might be found necessary, he had a powerful battery of Leyden jars and forty elements of Bunsen quite new. M. Nibor smilingly thanked him. "Keep your treasures," said he. "With a large bath and a big kettle of boiling water we shall have all we need. The colonel requires nothing but moisture. All that is needed is the restoration of the quantity of water necessary for the play of the organs. If you happen to have a room situated so that we can conveniently apply a jet of steam we shall be more than satisfied."

As good luck would have it, M. Audret, the architect, had constructed next to the laboratory a small bath-room, well lighted and commodious. The famous steam-engine was not far off, and its boiler hitherto had only been used to heat the water required for the baths of M. and Madame Renault. The colonel's body was conveyed into this room, with all the care required by its fragility. It would not have done to break a second ear in the hurry of removal. Léon ran to light the fire of the boiler, and M. Nibor dubbed him stoker on the spot.

Very soon a jet of steam penetrated the bath-room, creating round the colonel a moist atmosphere, which they gradually and steadily raised until it attained the temperature of the human body. This state of heat and humidity was kept up with the greatest care during twenty-four hours. No one in the house went to sleep. The members of the Paris Commission camped in the laboratory, Léon attended to the fire, M. Renault and Dr. Martout took it in turns to watch the thermometer. Madame Renault made tea, coffee, and even punch; Gothou, who had communicated in the morning, was praying fervently in a corner of her kitchen that this impious miracle might not succeed. A certain amount of agitation was already astir in the town, but it was difficult to say whether it was the result of the fête of the 15th, or curiosity as to the experiment of the seven learned men from Paris. On the 16th, by two o'clock, they had obtained encouraging results. The skin and muscles had regained nearly all their natural suppleness, but the joints were still difficult to bend. The collapsed condition of the walls of the stomach and the space between the ribs attested that as yet the viscera were far from having absorbed the quantity of water which they had lost under Professor Meiser's hand.

A bath was prepared, and kept at a temperature of $37\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ centigrade. They allowed the colonel's body to lie in it for

two hours, being careful to pass a soft sponge, impregnated with water, constantly over his head. M. Nibor took the colonel out as soon as the skin, which swelled more quickly than the other tissues, began to assume a white tint, and to wrinkle slightly. They kept him till the evening in this damp room, where they arranged an apparatus from which fell at intervals a soft rain of $37\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. A fresh bath was given in the evening, and during the night the body was wrapped in flannel, but still kept in the same vaporous atmosphere.

On the morning of the 17th, after a third bath, which lasted an hour and a half, the features of the face and form of the body had recovered their natural aspect. Any one would have said it was a man asleep. Five or six inquiring individuals were admitted to see him, amongst the number the colonel of the 23d regiment of the line. In the presence of these persons M. Nibor successfully moved each joint, to show that they had resumed their suppleness. He gently kneaded the limbs, trunk, and abdomen, half opened the lips, separated the jaws, which were pretty firmly closed, and saw that the tongue had come back to its usual size and consistency. He half opened the eyelids, the ball of the eye was firm and bright.

"Gentlemen," said the professor, "these are signs which have never deceived. I am now certain of success. In a few hours you will be able to assist at the first manifestation of life."

"But," interrupted one of the assistants, "why not directly?"

"Because the membranes of the eye are still a little paler than they should be. But those little veins which intersect the whites of the eyes have already taken a very hopeful aspect. The blood is satisfactorily recomposed. What is blood? Red globules floating in serum or whey. Poor Fougas's serum was dried up in his veins; the water which

we have introduced gradually, by a slow endosmosis, has swollen the albumen and the fibrin of the serum, which has returned to a liquid state. The red globules which dessication had united had become stationary, like shipwrecked vessels stranded at low water; now they are floating again, they thicken, swell themselves out, become more circular, detach themselves one from the other, and will begin to circulate in their various channels at the first impetus given them by the contraction of the heart."

"It now remains to be seen," said M. Renault, "if the heart can be put in motion. In a living man the heart moves at the instigation of the brain, transmitted through the nerves. The brain works through the impulse of the heart conveyed by the arteries. The whole forms a perfectly exact circle, out of which there is no hope of safety. When neither the heart nor the brain work, as in the case of the colonel, I can hardly see which of the two can give the impulsion to the other. Do you recollect that scene out of 'The School for Wives,' where Arnolphus knocks at his own door. The valet and the maid, Alain and Georgette are both in the house.

" 'Georgette,' cries Alain.

" 'Well?' answered Georgette.

" 'Open that door.'

" 'Go yourself.'

" 'Go you.'

" 'Faith, I shall not go.'

" 'No! I either.'

" 'Open it directly.'

" 'Open it yourself.'

"And so no one opens it. I am half afraid that we are likely to assist at a similar representation. The house is the colonel's body; Arnolphus, who would like to enter, is the vital principle; the heart and brain fill the parts of Georgette and Alain. One says to the other 'Open there.' 'Go your-

self,' says the other, and the vital principle waits at the door."

"Sir," said Dr. Nibor, smiling, "you forget the end of the scene. Arnolphus gets angry, and cries out, 'Whichever of you two does not open the door shall have nothing to eat for four days,' upon which Alain hastens and Georgette runs, and the door is opened. Understand, I am only speaking thus in order to carry out your argument, for the word vital principle is in direct contradiction to the actual state of science. Life will show itself as soon as the heart, or the brain, or some other portion of the body which has the power to act spontaneously shall have absorbed the necessary quantity of water which it requires. An organised substance has properties which are inherent in it, and which manifest themselves without the impulsion of any foreign principle, provided they find themselves in certain medium conditions. Why do not M. Fougas' muscles contract themselves yet! Why does not the tissue of the brain become active? Because they have, neither of them, the requisite quantity of moisture. There wants, perhaps, a pint of water in the cup of life. But I shall be in no hurry to fill it; I am too much afraid of breaking it. Before giving another bath to our friend, I must again shampoo all his members, and submit his abdomen to methodical pressure, so that the scrosities of the stomach, the chest, and the heart may become perfectly disunited, and able to glide smoothly one over the other. You can easily understand that the slightest hitch in any of these regions, or even the least resistance, would be enough to kill our patient at the very moment of his resuscitation."

Joining precept to practice while speaking, he kneaded the torso of the colonel. As there were rather too many spectators in the bath room, where it was almost impossible to move, M. Nibor begged them to pass into the laboratory. But the laboratory was so full, they were obliged to take

refuge in the drawing-room. The Commissioners of the Biological Society could hardly find a corner of a table to draw up the report. The drawing-room itself was crammed with people; so was the dining-room, and even the courtyard of the house. Friends, strangers, unknown individuals, all elbowed each other, and waited in silence. The silence of a crowd, however, is rather like the roar of the sea.

Fat Dr. Martout, excessively fussy, stemmed the tide of busybodies, and showed himself from time to time like a galleon bearing important news! Each separate word of his was passed from mouth to mouth till it reached the street, where at least thirty groups of soldiers and citizens were moving about. Never had this little Rue de la Faisanderie witnessed such a crowd; a passer-by, astonished, stopped and asked—"What is the matter; is it a funeral?"

"On the contrary, sir."

"It is a baptism, then?"

"Yes, with hot water!"

A birth?"

A resuscitation."

An elderly judge of the Civil Tribunal explained to the judge's substitute the legend of *Æson*, who was boiled in *Medea's* cauldron. "It is nearly the same process," said he, "and I could almost believe that the poets had maligned the sorceress of *Colchis*. Some fine Latin verses might be made on the subject, but I have lost my former poetical talent!

"*Fabula Medeam cur crimine carpit iniquo?*

Ecce novus surgit redivivis Æson ab undis

Fortior, arma petens, juvenili pectore miles.

Redivivis is taken in the active sense; it is a license, or at least a piece of boldness. Ah, sir, there was a time when I was equal to any audacity in Latin verse."

"Corp'ral," said a young soldier of the class of 1859.

"What is it, Fréminot!"

"Is it true that they are boiling an old fellow in a bath and talking of bringing him to life again in his colonel's uniform?"

"True, or not true, I have heard an inkling of the thing."

"I should think it was a story without any foundation, with all respect to you."

"Learn, Fréminot, that nothing is impossible to your superiors! Don't you know that dried vegetables, when boiled, resume their original and primitive condition?"

"But corp'ral, if they kept them boiling for three days, they would fall to pieces."

"Fool! Why do they call old fellows tough as leather?"

At noon, the commissary of police and the lieutenant of gendarmerie made their way through the crowd, and entered the house. These gentlemen lost no time in informing M. Renault, senior, that their visit was in no wise official, but prompted by curiosity. They met the sous-préfet in the corridor; also the mayor and Gothon, the latter of whom was loudly lamenting that the government should lend itself to such witchcraft.

Towards one o'clock, M. Nibor gave the colonel another and more prolonged bath, on leaving which the body underwent a harder and more complete kneading than the first. "Now," said the doctor, "we may carry M. Fougas into the laboratory in order to give his resuscitation all necessary publicity. It would be better to clothe him, but how? His uniform is all in tatters."

"I think," said good M. Renault, "the colonel is nearly about my size. I can, therefore, lend him some of my clothes. Heaven grant he may have the chance of wearing them, but, between ourselves, I have not much hope."

Gothon, grumbling all the while, brought everything that

was necessary to clothe a man from head to foot; but even her bad temper gave way at the sight of the handsome colonel. "Poor gentleman," cried she; "how young, how fair—as white as a little chicken! If he should never revive, it would be a pity!"

There were about forty persons in the laboratory when they carried in Fongas. M. Nibor, assisted by M. Martout, placed him on a sofa, and requested a few moments perfect silence. At this juncture, Madame Renault begged to know if she might be admitted; they let her in.

"Madame and gentlemen," said Dr. Nibor, "life will manifest itself in a few minutes. Possibly the muscles may be the first to act, and their action may be convulsive, owing to not being yet properly regulated by the influence of the nervous system. I ought to warn you of this fact, so that in case of its happening, you may not feel any alarm. I trust, however, that the first spontaneous contractions will take place in the fibres of the heart. This is what happens in the embryo, where the rhythmic movements of the heart precede any nervous action."

He then began again a series of systematic pressures on the lower part of the chest, rubbing the skin of the hands, raising the eyelids, feeling the pulse, and auscultating the region of the heart.

The attention of the spectators was for a moment diverted by a noise outside. A battalion of the 23rd foot were passing through the street, headed by their band. Whilst the brass instruments of M. Sax were shaking the windows of the house, a sudden colour flushed the cheeks of the colonel. His eyes, which had remained half open, shone with increased brightness. At the same moment Dr. Nibor, who was still auscultating his chest, exclaimed—"I can hear the beating of the heart! Hardly had he spoken when the chest swelled out with a violent aspiration, the limbs contracted, the body

sat up, and there was heard a cry of "Long live the Emperor."

Then, as if such an effort had exhausted all his energy, Colonel Fougas fell back again on the sofa, murmuring in a faint voice—"Where am I? Waiter, bring the almanack!"

CHAPTER XI.

WHEREIN COLONEL FOUGAS HEARS SOME NEWS WHICH WILL
APPEAR RATHER OLD TO MY READERS.

AMONG the group of persons present at this scene, there was not a single one who had ever witnessed a resuscitation. I leave you to imagine the surprise and joy which burst forth in the laboratory. Three rounds of applause, mingled with exclamations, greeted the triumphant success of Dr. Nibor.

The crowd collected in the drawing-room, the passages, and courtyard, even in the street, understood by this token that the experiment had been successful. Nothing could stop them, they burst open the doors, surmounted all obstacles, upset the learned men who tried vainly to bar their progress, and at length rushed into the laboratory.

"Gentlemen, cried Dr. Nibor, "do you wish to kill him?"

But he spoke to deaf ears; the most overpowering of all passions—curiosity—was urging on the crowd; each one would see at the risk of crushing his neighbour. M. Nibor fell; M. Renault and his son, in trying to raise him, were thrown down in their turn. Madame Renault was precipitated at the side of the colonel, and began to scream with all her might.

"By Jove!" cried the colonel, raising himself as if by a

spring, "those wretches will suffocate us if some one does not make an end of them."

His attitude, the fire in his eyes, and above all the prestige of the miracle, had the effect of clearing a space around him. You would have thought the wall had fallen back, or that the spectators had slipped one inside the other.

"Out of this, all of you," cried the colonel, in his loudest tone of command.

A concert of exclamations, explanations, arguments began around him. He mistook them for threats, and, seizing the first chair within reach, brandished it like a weapon, pushing, striking, upsetting citizens, soldiers, officials, professors, friends, busybodies, and police, and finally drove this torrent of humanity into the street, with fearful tumult. This done, he bolted the door, returned to the laboratory, saw three men standing over Madame Renault, and said to the old lady in softened tones—"Well, old lady, shall I serve these three like the rest?"

"Heaven forbid!" cried Madame Renault, it is my husband and son, sir, and Dr. Nibor who has just restored you to life."

"In that case, praise be to them, old lady. Fougas has never been found wanting in gratitude and hospitality. As for you, my Esculapius, shake hands!"

At that moment he perceived about a dozen inquisitive spirits, who had climbed up from the pavement and were hanging on to the windows of the laboratory. Walking straight up to them, he opened the windows with a suddenness which made them fall back into the crowd.

"People," said he, "I have flogged a hundred pandours, who respected neither weakness nor sex. For the benefit of any one who feels himself aggrieved, let me tell him I am Colonel Fougas, of the 23rd regiment, and long live the Emperor!"

A mixture of applause, cries, laughter, and jests greeted this strange allocution. Léon Renault hastened out to make excuses to all those to whom he considered they were due, and invited some of his friends to dine that very evening with the terrible colonel. Above all, he did not forget to send a messenger to Clementina.

Fougas, after he had addressed the crowd, turned towards his host with a certain amount of swagger, and, sitting astride the chair which he had already made use of, he twisted the tips of his moustache and said—"Now then, let us have a little conversation. It appears I have been ill."

"Very ill."

"That's strange. I feel as strong as a horse, and as hungry as a hunter; and while waiting for dinner, I should have no objection to a glass of cognac."

Madame Renault went out to give the order, and returned immediately.

"But tell me—where am I?" continued the colonel. "By all this paraphernalia, I seem to recognise a disciple of Urania, perhaps a friend of Monge and Berthollet. The amiable expression of your faces proves to me that you are not natives of this land of *sauer kraut*. Yes, I have faith in the beatings of my own heart. Friends, we belong to the same nation. The kindness of your welcome, without any other indication, would have convinced me that you are French. Children of my country, what storm has driven you to these inhospitable shores?"

"My dear colonel," replied M. Nibor, "if you will only be reasonable, and not ask so many questions at once. Let us have the pleasure of telling you everything quietly and consecutively, for you have a great deal to learn."

The colonel reddened with anger, and replied hastily—"Then it is not you, my little gentleman, who will be my instructor."

A drop of blood falling on his hand diverted his thoughts for the moment. "Hollo," said he, "am I bleeding?"

"It is nothing, circulation has been established, and your broken ear——"

The colonel quickly raised his hand to his ear, and said—
"By Jove! it is quite true; but for the life of me I can't remember when the accident happened."

"I will just dress it for you, and in a day or two it will be all right again."

"Don't give yourself the trouble, my dear Hippocrates, a pinch of gunpowder is a sovereign remedy."

M. Nibor applied himself to dress it in less military fashion, and, during the discussion, Léon entered. "Ah!" said he to the doctor, "I see you are repairing the injury I inflicted."

"Thunder and lightning!" cried the colonel, escaping from M. Nibor's hands and seizing Léon by the collar. "It was you then, lout, who broke my ear?"

Léon was very good-natured, but he lost patience, and pushed his man from him roughly. "Yes sir," said he, "I did break your ear in pulling it; and if that little accident had not happened, it is very certain that you would now be under ground. I saved your life after having bought you with my money when you were not considered to be worth twenty-five louis. I have passed three days and two nights in keeping up the fire for your use; my father has supplied you with the very clothes you are wearing; you are in our house. Drink the glass of brandy which Gothou has just brought in, but, for heaven's sake, give up calling me lout, addressing my mother as old lady, throwing our friends out into the street, and comparing them to pandours!"

The colonel, quite overwhelmed, held out his hand to Léon, to M. Renault, and the doctor, gallantly kissed the tips of Madame Renault's fingers, and swallowed, at one

gulp, a claret glass filled to the brim with brandy, and said, in a voice quivering with emotion—"Kind inmates, forgive the digressions of a quick but generous nature. To conquer my passions shall, for the future, be my study. After having conquered all the nations on earth, it is well to conquer oneself!"

Having said this, he held out his ear to M. Nibor, who finished dressing it. "Then," endeavouring to recall his recollections, he observed, "they did not shoot me after all?"

"No."

"And I was not frozen in that tower?"

"Not quite!"

"Why have they taken away my uniform? Oh, I can guess—I am a prisoner."

"No, you are quite free."

"Free! Long live the Emperor! Then I must not lose a moment. How many miles is it from here to Dantzic?"

"It is a very long way off."

"What do you call this hole?"

"Fontainebleau."

"What! Fontainebleau in France?"

"Seine-et-Marne. We were just going to introduce the sous-préfet to you, when you threw him into the street."

"What do I care about your sous-préfet! I have a message from the Emperor to General Rapp, and I must start this very day for Dantzic. Heaven knows if I shall arrive in time!"

"My poor colonel, you would arrive too late. Dantzic capitulated."

"Impossible! how long ago?"

"Nearly forty-six years since."

"Thunder and lightning! I don't allow any one to joke with me!"

M. Nibor put an almanack into his hand. "See for yourself," said he. "It is now the 17th of August, 1859; you fell asleep in the tower of Liebenfeld on the 11th of November, 1813; so that the world has now been going on without you for forty-six years all but three months."

"Twenty-four and forty-six; then I must be seventy by your reckoning."

"Your spirit proves plainly that you are still only twenty-four."

He shrugged his shoulders, tore up the calendar, and stamping with his foot on the floor, exclaimed—"Your almanack is a humbug."

M. Renault ran to his book-case, took out half a dozen books hap-hazard, and made him read below the titles, the different dates, 1833, 1847, 1856.

"Forgive me," said Fougas, burying his head in his hands, "what has happened is so astonishing. I don't think any other man ever went through such an ordeal—I am seventy!"

Excellent Madame Renault brought a looking-glass from the bath room, and gave it him, saying—"Look at yourself."

Holding the glass in both hands, he was absorbed in silently renewing acquaintance with his former self, when an organ in the street struck up the air of "*Partant pour la Syrie*," whereupon Fougas threw down the glass, crying out—"What nonsense you are talking, I hear Queen Hortense's song."

M. Renault explained to him patiently, while picking up the pieces of broken glass, that the pretty song of Queen Hortense had become a national and even official air, that the regimental bands had substituted this gentle melody for the fierce "*Marseillaise*," and that, strange to say, our soldiers did not fight less well for the change. But the colonel had already opened the window, and was calling out

to the Savoyard—"Here, my friend! a napoleon for you if you will tell me the year I am living in."

The player began to dance as lightly as he could, all the while shaking his musical instrument.

"Advance to order," cried the colonel, "and leave that confounded machine in peace."

"A sou, my good master, a little sou."

"I will give you not only a sou, but a whole napoleon, if you tell me what year it is now?"

"What fun! he! he! he!"

"If you don't tell me quickly, I'll cut your ears off!"

The Savoyard fled, but came back almost immediately, as if he recollected the old saying, "nothing venture, nothing have."

"Sir," said he, in a wheedling tone, "we are in the year 1859."

"Good," said Fougas. He put his hand into his pocket for the money, but found nothing. Léon saw his embarrassment, and threw the twenty francs into the courtyard. Before shutting the window, he pointed with his finger to the front of a pretty little new building, on which the colonel could read plainly enough—

"AUDRET, ARCHITECT,
1859,"

perfectly correct information, and for which he did not require to pay twenty francs.

A little confused Fougas pressed Léon's hand, saying—"Friend, I will not forget in future that confidence is the first duty that gratitude owes to benevolence, but talk to me of our mother country! I am standing on the sacred soil where I first drew breath, and yet I am ignorant of the destiny of my country. France is still the queen of the world, is she not?"

"Certainly," said Léon.

"How is the Emperor?"

"Very well."

"And the Empress?"

"Very well, too."

"And the King of Rome?"

"The Prince Imperial? Oh, he is a fine child."

"What do you mean? a fine child! and yet you have the audacity to tell me we are now in the year 1859."

M. Nibor here interposed to explain in a few words that the reigning sovereign of France at the moment was not Napoleon I., but Napoleon III.

"But then," cried Fongas, "my Emperor must be dead!"

"It is true."

"Impossible! Tell me anything you like but that. My Emperor is immortal!"

M. Nibor and the Renaults, though not historians by profession, were obliged to give the colonel an abridged history of our country. They fetched a big book written by M. de Norvins and finely illustrated by Raffet. He only believed the truth when he held it in his own hands, and even then could not refrain from exclaiming more than once—"It is impossible! this cannot be history that you are reading to me, it is a romance, written to make soldiers weep."

This young man must indeed have had a strong well-balanced mind to learn in the space of three quarters of an hour all the misfortunes that destiny had distributed over eighteen years—from the first abdication up to the death of the King of Rome. Less fortunate than his former companions in arms, there was no interval of repose for him between all these terrible and repeated shocks which struck to the very core of his heart. One might almost have feared the news would have gone home like a bullet to its mark, and that poor Colonel Fongas would have died in the first

hour of his life. But this athlete of a man yielded and bounded back again like a spring. He shouted with admiration while hearing of the grand battles of the campaign in France ; he roared with anguish as they told him of the farewell at Fontainebleau. The return from the island of Elba cast a gleam of sunshine over his handsome face, his heart went out to Waterloo with the last army of the Empire, and almost broke there. Then he clenched his fists, and muttered between his teeth—"If I only had been there at the head of the gallant 23rd, Blucher and Wellington should have seen then !"

The invasion, the white flag, the martyr of St. Helena, the abject terror of all Europe, the murder of Murat, that idol of the cavalry, the death of Ney, of Brune, of Mouton Duvernet, and so many other large-souled men whom he had known, admired and loved, threw him into a succession of fits of rage, but never overcame him. In listening to the account of Napoleon's death, he swore to devour the heart of England ; the protracted agony of the delicate and charming heir of the Empire tempted him with a desire to tear the vitals out of Austria. When the drama was ended, and the curtain fell upon Schœnbrunn, he wiped the tears from his eyes, saying—"It is enough, I have lived in one moment the whole life of a man ; now show me a map of France."

The colonel began to turn over the leaves of an atlas, while M. Renault tried to give him a *résumé* of the events of the Restoration and the Monarchy of 1830. But Fougas' mind was far away. "What does it matter to me," said he, "that a couple of hundred chattering deputies put one king in the place of another ? Kings, indeed, I have seen plenty of them on the ground ! If the Empire had only lasted ten years longer, I might have treated myself to one to brush my boots !"

When they placed the atlas before him, he exclaimed, at first disdainfully—"That France!" But soon there fell two big tears of tenderness upon the Ardèche and the Gironde. He kissed the map, and said with an emotion which nearly overcame his listeners—"Forgive me, my poor old country for having added insult to thy misfortunes! Those wretches we licked everywhere must have taken advantage of my slumber to clip thy frontiers; but large or small, rich or poor, thou art my mother, and I love thee as a good son should do! Here is Corsica, where the giant of our century was born; Toulouse, where I first saw the light; Nancy, where my heart beat with love for the first time, where she whom I called my *Æglæ* perhaps awaits me still! France, thou hast a temple in my soul, this arm belongs to thee, and thou shalt find me ever ready to shed my last drop of blood either to defend or to avenge thee!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONVALESCENT'S FIRST MEAL.

THE messenger whom Léon had sent to Moret could not arrive there before seven o'clock. Supposing he found the ladies still at table, that the dinner was shortened by this great *pièce* of news, and that there was no delay in getting a carriage, then Clementina and her aunt would most probably be at Fontainebleau between ten and eleven o'clock.

M. Renault's son was enjoying, in anticipation, the delight of his betrothed. What a joy for both of them when he should present to her the miraculous man whom she had preserved from the horrors of the tomb, and whom he had restored to life at her entreaties! Meanwhile Gothon, as happy

and proud as she had before been anxious and horrified, was laying the table for twelve people. Her fellow-servant, a young rustic of eighteen, born in the commune of Sablons, aided her with his hands, and amused her with his conversation. "So then, Mademoiselle Gothon," said he, placing a pile of plates before her, "one may say he came out of his box like a ghost to startle the commissary and the sous-préfet."

"A ghost, if you like, Célestin. It is very certain he has come from a long distance, poor young man ; but ghost is hardly a proper word to use in speaking of one's masters."

"It is true, then, that he is going to be our master, too, that one ! There are more and more of them every day. I would far rather a few more servants would come to the rescue."

"Hold your tongue, you lazy fellow ! When the gentlemen give us a 'tip' on leaving, you don't complain that we are only two to share it."

"Very likely ! I carried more than fifty pails of water to simmer your colonel in, and I know very well he will give me nothing, for he has not a copper in his pockets. It seems as if money was scarce in the country he comes from."

"They say he is come in for a fine inheritance, Strasbourg way, from some gentleman who left him all his property."

"I say, Gothon, you read your little book every Sunday ; tell us where this colonel has been housed all the time he has been out of the world ?"

"Why, in purgatory, of course."

"Then, why don't you ask him for news of that everlasting Baptiste, your lover of 1837, who let himself fall from the top of a house, and for whom you have had so many masses said ? They must have met each other out there."

"It is very possible."

"Unless Baptiste has managed to get out, thanks to the money you have been paying for him so long."

"Well, I'll go this evening into the colonel's room, and as he gives himself no airs, he'll tell me what he knows about it; but, Célestin, will you never leave off these tricks? Look here now, you have again been rubbing my silver dessert knives upon the knife-board!"

The guests arrived, and were shown into the room where the Renault family awaited them, with M. Nibor and Colonel Fougas. They introduced, in turn, to the colonel, the mayor of the town, Dr. Martout, Maître Bonnivet, the notary, M. Audret, and three members of the Paris Commission; the other three had been obliged to leave before dinner.

The guests were not quite easy in their minds. Fougas's first impetuous movement, resulting in a general issue of grazed shins, made them imagine that they might be going to dine with a lunatic. But curiosity prevailed over fear, and the colonel soon re-assured them by the most cordial greeting. He apologised for having behaved like a man from another world. He talked a good deal—too much perhaps—but they were so pleased to hear him, and his words gained so much weight by the singularity of events, that he obtained an unmitigated success.

They told him that Dr. Martout had been one of the principal agents in his recovery, with another person, whom they hoped to be able to introduce to him later. He thanked M. Martout warmly, and asked if he might express his gratitude to the other person.

"I hope," said Léon, "that you will see her to-night."

They were only waiting for the colonel of the 23rd regiment, M. Rollon, who arrived, not without some little trouble in making his way through the crowd of people which filled the Rue de la Faisanderie. He was a man of forty-five, with an abrupt manner, and an open countenance. His hair was beginning to turn grey, but his thick moustache, twisted

up at the ends, was still unchanged. He spoke little, but to the point; was full of information, and did not boast; in fact was a fine type of a colonel. He went straight up to Fougas, holding out his hand as if to an old acquaintance.

"My dear comrade," said he, "I have taken the greatest interest in your restoration to life, both on my own account and that of the regiment. The 23rd, which I have the honour to command, respected you up to yesterday as an ancestor; from to-day it will cherish you as a friend." No allusion whatever to the scene of the afternoon, when M. Rollon had been kicked with as little ceremony as the rest of them.

Fougas responded, though rather coldly. "My dear comrade," said he, "I thank you for your kind sentiments. It is a strange fate that brings me face to face with my successor, the very day that I re-open my eyes to the light; for, after all, I am neither deceased nor a general. I have not exchanged, nor got my retirement, and yet I see another officer, more worthy, no doubt, at the head of my fine regiment. However, if your motto is 'Honour and Courage,' as I know it is, I have no right to complain, and the regiment is in good hands."

Dinner was announced. Madame Renault took Fougas's arm, and made him sit on her right hand, and M. Nibor on her left. The colonel and the mayor sat on either side of M. Renault; the other guests seated themselves indiscriminately, and without ceremony. Fougas hastily swallowed the soup and the *entrées*, partaking twice of each dish, and drinking in proportion. Quite an appetite of another world!

"Esteemed amphytrion," said he to M. Renault, "don't be alarmed at seeing me punish your dishes. I have always eaten like this, excepting during the retreat from Russia; besides, you must remember that I went to bed yesterday at Liebenfeld without having supped." He then begged M.

Nibor to explain to him by what strange concatenation of events he had come from Liebenfeld to Fontainebleau.

"Do you remember," asked the doctor, "an old German who acted as interpreter for you during the council of war?"

"Perfectly; a good old fellow who wore a violet wig. I shall remember him all my life—there never could have been two wigs that colour."

"Well, then, it was the man in the violet wig; in other words, the celebrated Dr. Meiser, who preserved your life."

"Where is he? I must throw myself into his arms—tell him—"

"He was upwards of sixty-eight when he rendered you that little service, and would be in his hundred and fifteenth year if he had lived to receive your thanks."

"Then he is no longer alive! Death has defrauded him of my gratitude."

"As yet you do not know all you owe him. He left you by his will in 1824, a fortune of 375,000 francs, of which you are the lawful possessor. Now, as a capital, invested at five per cent., doubles itself in fourteen years, thanks to interest and compound interest, you possessed in 1846 a trifle over 750,000 francs, and in 1852 a million and a half. If you care to leave your funds still in the hands of Herr Nicholas Meiser, of Dantzic, that excellent man will owe you three millions in 1866—about seven years hence. To-night we will give you a copy of the will of your benefactor; it is a very instructive document, which you can meditate upon in your bed."

"I will read it with pleasure," said Colonel Fongas, "but money has no value in my eyes. Riches engender idleness. Shall I languish in the effeminate indolence of a sybarite? Shall I enervate my senses on a bed of roses? Never! The smell of powder is far sweeter to me than all the perfumes of Arabia. Life would hold neither charm nor zest for me

if I were obliged to renounce the exciting clash of arms. And the day you hear that Fougas no longer marches with his regiment, you may safely reply, "then Fougas no longer lives!"

He turned to the new colonel of the 23rd saying—"Toll them, my brave comrade, that the luxurious display of wealth is a thousand times less sweet than the austere simplicity of a soldier! To a colonel especially! Colonels are the kings of the army; a colonel is less than a general, and yet he possesses something more. He lives more among his soldiers, he penetrates further into the intimacy of his troops. He is the father, judge, friend of his regiment. The future of each of his men is in his hands, the colours are kept in his tent, or his room. The colonel and the colours are not divided—one is the soul, the other the body!" He then asked leave from M. Rollon to go and see the standard of the 23rd that he might embrace it.

"You shall see it to-morrow morning," replied the new colonel, if you will do me the honour of breakfasting with me and some of my officers."

Fougas accepted the invitation with delight, and plunged forthwith into a series of questions about pay, amount reserved for clothing, promotion, reserve, uniform, full and fatigue dress, armament, and tactics. He understood in a moment the advantage of a percussion gun, but it was impossible to explain to him a rifled-cannon. Artillery was not his forte; he confessed, nevertheless, that Napoleon owed more than one of his victories to his fine artillery.

Whilst Madame Renault's innumerable dishes were going the round of the table, Fougas, all the while keeping his teeth at work, was asking what had been the principal wars that year. How many nations France had on her hands, and if they were contemplating the conquest of the world!

The answers he received, though they failed to satisfy him, still left him some hope. "I did well to come," said he, "there will be some work yet to be done."

The war in Africa did not interest him much, though the 23rd had gained a large share of laurels out there. "As a school it is good," said he, "a soldier should practise elsewhere than in the Tivoli gardens, behind the petticoats of the nurses. But why the deuce don't they let loose 500,000 men upon England? England is the soul of the coalition, I tell you that!"

What a difficulty it was to make him understand the Crimean campaign, where the English fought with us side by side! "I can understand," said he, "our falling foul of the Russians, they made me eat my best horse. But the English are a thousand times worse. If that young man (Napoleon III.) does not know it, I must tell him. There is no quarter possible after what they did at St. Helena! If I had been commander-in-chief in the Crimea, I should have begun by flooring the Russians; afterwards I should have turned round upon the English, and flung them all into the sea, which is their natural element!"

They gave him some details of the Italian campaign, and he was delighted to hear that the 23rd had stormed and taken a redoubt under the eyes of Marshal the Duke de Solferino. "It is the tradition of the regiment," said he, wiping his eyes with his napkin, "that the brave 23rd will never do otherwise; the goddess of victory has spread her wings over it."

What surprised him though, was, that so important a war should have been so quickly ended. It was necessary to inform him that within the last four years, means had been discovered of transporting a hundred thousand men from one end of Europe to the other in four days.

"Good," said he, "I accept it. What astonishes me is,

that the Emperor did not invent it in 1810, for he had a genius for transport, a genius for commissariat, for office work, for everything! But surely the Austrians defended themselves, and it cannot be possible for you to have arrived at Vienna under three months."

"We did not go so far."

"You did not push on to Vienna?"

"No!"

"Then where did you sign the treaty of peace?"

"At Villa Franca."

"At Villa Franca, is that the capital of Austria?"

"No, it is a village in Italy."

"Sir, I don't approve of a treaty of peace being signed anywhere but in the capital. It is one of our principles, our A.B.C., the first paragraph of our theory. It seems to me the world has changed very much since I left it—but patience!"

Here I am obliged to confess that Fougas got very drunk at dessert. He had eaten and drank like one of Homer's heroes, and talked more than ever Cicero did in his best days. The fumes of the wine, the smell of the viands, and his own eloquence mounted to his brain. He became familiar, spoke affectionately to some, and rudely to others, and poured forth a torrent of absurdities, sufficient to have turned forty water mills. His drunkenness, however, had nothing debasing about it, it was merely the exuberance of a youthful, ardent, vain-glorious and reckless spirit. He proposed five or six toasts: to glory, to the extension of our frontiers, the destruction of the very last Englishman, to Mademoiselle Mars, the star of the French stage, to affection, that slight but charming tie which unites the lover and the object of his adoration, the father and the son, the colonel and his regiment.

His style, which was a singular mixture of familiarity and

emphasis, caused more than one of his audience to smile, which he perceived with a kind of distrust, and now and then asked out loud if these people were not making fun of him. "Bad luck," he exclaimed, "bad luck to those who want to make me take a bladder for a lantern ! The lantern would explode like a bomb shell, and scatter death and destruction amongst them."

After such language, there was nothing left for him but to roll under the table, and this event was generally expected. But the colonel belonged to a robust generation, accustomed to every kind of excess, as strong to resist the inroads of pleasure, as against danger, privation, and fatigue. When Madame Renault pushed back her chair to intimate that dinner was over, Fougas rose without effort, gracefully offered his arm, and conducted his hostess into the drawing-room. He walked a little stiffly, and all of a piece, but he went straight before him, and never once stumbled. He took two cups of coffee and a fair quantity of spirits, after which he began to talk away in the most rational manner possible. Towards ten o'clock, Dr. Martout having expressed a wish to hear his history, he took up a position in the midst of the party, reflected for a few minutes, and then asked for a glass of sugar and water. Every one sat round him and he launched out into the following story, the rather antiquated style of which must claim the reader's indulgence.

CHAPTER XIII.

HISTORY OF COLONEL FOUGAS, RELATED BY HIMSELF.

"Do not expect me to embellish my story with those flowers of speech more agreeable than correct, with which the imagination, by way of ornament, sometimes bedizens the truth. A soldier and a Frenchman, I doubly ignore deception. Friendship interrogates, and frankness shall reply.

"I was born of poor, but respectable, parents, at the opening of that glorious and fertile year which illumined the *Jeu de Paume* with the aureola of liberty. The South was my native clime, and the dialect dear to the troubadours was that I lisped in my cradle. My birth cost my mother her life. My father, humble owner of a little farm, moistened his bread with the sweat of his brow. As you may imagine, my first recreations were not those of opulence. The many coloured pebbles one picks up on the shore, and that well-known insect which children love to hold fluttering free and captive at the same time at the end of a string, stood me instead of other playthings.

"A former minister of the altar, who had enfranchised himself from the sombre trammels of fanaticism, and reconciled himself to all the new institutions of France, was my Chiron and my Mentor. He fed me with the strong marrow of the lions of Rome and Athens, and his lips distilled in my ears the embalmed honey of wisdom. Honour be to thee, respectable and learned old man, who gave me the first lessons of science and the first example of virtue !

"Already this atmosphere of glory which the genius of a man, and the valour of a people, diffused over the country, fired all my senses, and caused my youthful heart to throb. France, on the verge of a civil war, had, as it were, bound together her scattered forces, to hurl them against Europe, and the world, startled, if not subdued, gave way before the impetus of this overwhelming torrent.

"What man, what Frenchman, could have heard, unmoved, this echo of victory reverberating from a million of hearts? Almost before I had emerged from childhood, I felt that honour was more precious than life. The warlike sound of the drum drew tears from my eyes. 'And I also,' said I, while following a regimental band through the streets of Toulon, 'I also will gather laurels, even if I water them with my blood.'

"The pale olive branch of peace I looked upon with disdain. In vain I heard of the peaceful triumphs of the bar, the pacific delights of commerce and finance. I preferred the sword to the toga of our Ciceros, the flowing robes of our magistrates, the curule chair of our legislators, or the riches of our Mondors. One would have imagined that I had been nursed by Bellona. 'Conquer or die:' such was my motto, and yet I was barely sixteen at that time.

"With what disdain did I listen to the histories of our Proteuses of politics; with what haughty glances I traced the Turcarets of finance, buried in the cushions of their magnificent chariots, and driven by a liveried Automadon, to the boudoir of some Aspasia. But if I only heard recounted the prowess of the Knights of the Round Table, or the valorous deeds of the Crusaders celebrated in sonorous rhyme, if chance placed in my hand a history of one of our modern Rolands, reproduced in a military despatch by the heir of Charlemagne, the prophetic fire of future battles flashed at once from my youthful eyes.

“ Ah ! it was too trying to have to wait, and the bit I champed so impatiently, would probably have snapped in twain had not a father’s wisdom cast it aside. ‘Go,’ he said, vainly trying to restrain his tears, ‘thy father is not a tyrant, and he will not sadden the life he has given thee. I had hoped that thy hand would have closed my eyes, here, in our cottage home ; but when patriotism has once spoken, egotism must be silent. For the future, my prayers will follow thee to the field where Mars reaps a harvest of heroes. Mayest thou deserve the palm of courage, and show thyself as good a citizen as thou hast proved a son.’

“ So saying, he opened his arms. I threw myself into them as we mingled our tears together, and I promised to return to my native hearth as soon as the star of honour should adorn my breast. But, alas ! we were never to meet again. Fate, which gilded the thread of my existence, soon cut his short without pity. A stranger closed his eyes whilst I was gaining my first epaulet at the battle of Jena.

“ Lieutenant at Eylau, captain at Wagram, and decorated by the hand of the Emperor himself on the battle-field, head of a battalion at Almeida, lieutenant-colonel at Badajoz, colonel at Moscow, I had drained the cup of victory, but had also drank of the bitter draught of adversity. The icy plains of Russia have seen me alone with a handful of brave followers, sad remnant of my regiment, devouring the remains of my faithful servant which had carried me so often, even into the very midst of the enemy’s battalions. Tender and true companion of my dangers, unshod by accident at Smolenska, he devoted his manes to the good of his master, and made of his skin a protection for my bruised and frozen feet.

“ My tongue refuses to narrate all our adventures during that fatal campaign. Some day, perhaps, I may write them with a pen steeped in tears—tears, that tribute of human weakness. Overtaken by the cold season in this freezing

zone, without fire, without bread, without shoes, without any means of transport, deprived of the assistance of Esculapian art, harassed by the Cossacks, plundered by the peasants, regular vampires, we saw our silent guns, fallen into the hands of the enemy, flash death against ourselves. What more can I tell you? The passage of the Beresina, the flocking to Wilna, all the d—, but I feel that grief leads me astray, and that my words are tinged with the bitterness of my recollections.

“Nature and love lent me short but sweet consolations. Recovered from my fatigues, I spent some happy days in my native country, in the peaceful valleys of Nancy. While our phalanxes were arming for new combats; while I rallied round my flag three thousand young, but valiant, warriors, all bent upon clearing for their descendants the road to honour, a sentiment, hitherto unknown to me, stealthily gained a footing in my breast.

“Adorned with all the gifts of Nature, enriched by an excellent education, the young and interesting Clementina had scarcely yet emerged from the ignorance of childhood to enter on the sweet illusions of youth. Eighteen springs comprised her life; her parents were in the habit of offering to some of the chief officers of the army a hospitality which, though not gratuitous, was nevertheless full of cordiality. To see this young girl, and to love her, was with me the affair of a moment. Her virgin heart smiled on my passion; at the first expression of my love, I saw the blush of modesty fly to her brow. We exchanged vows one lovely evening in June, under an arbour, where her happy father used to pour out for the thirsty officers the brown beverage of the north. I swore that I would marry her, and she promised to be mine. Our happiness, unknown to the rest of the world, was calm as a rivulet whose pure stream is never troubled by storms, and which, flowing gently through

flowery meads, cools and refreshes the woods which protect its modest course.

"A thunderbolt separated us at the very moment when the law and the church were on the point of cementing our sweet ties. I was obliged to leave before I could give my name to her who had already given me her heart. I promised to return; she promised to wait for me, and I tore myself, bathed in tears, from her arms to fly to the laurels of Dresden, and the cypresses of Leipsic. In the interval between the two battles, I received a few lines from her. 'You will soon be a father,' she wrote me. Am I one? heaven knows! Did she wait for me? I firmly believe so. It must have been a weary waiting for her by the cradle of that child, who must be forty-six years old at this moment, and who in his turn might be my father! Forgive me if I detain you so long with this record of misfortune. I wished to have passed rapidly over this part of my lamentable story, but the trials of virtue have something sweet about them which softens the bitterness of grief!

"Some days after the disasters of Leipsic, the giant of our century sent for me to his tent, and said—'Colonel, are you man enough to traverse four armies?'

"'Yes, sire.'

"'Alone, and without escort?'

"'Yes, sire.'

"'It is a question of carrying a letter to Dantzic.'

"'Yes, sire.'

"'You will deliver it yourself into General Rapp's own hands?'

"'Yes, sire.'

"'You may probably be taken prisoner, or killed.'

"'Yes, sire.'

"'For this reason, I send two other officers with copies of the same despatch. There will be three of you; the enemy

will kill two. The third one will arrive safely, and France will be saved.'

" 'Yes, sire.'

" 'The one who returns will be general of brigade.'

" 'Yes, sire.'

"All the details of this interview, all Napoleon's words, all the replies I had the honour of addressing to him, are engraven on my memory. We all three started separately. Alas! not one of us reached the goal of his courageous hopes, and to-day I learn that France was not saved. But when I see dolts of historians relating that the Emperor omitted to send despatches to General Rapp, I feel inclined to cut their —, well, the thread of their discourse. A prisoner of the Russians, in a German village, I was lucky enough to fall in with an old savant, who gave me proof of rare friendship. Who could have guessed that when I yielded at last to the drowsiness of excessive cold, in the tower of Liebenfeld, that this would not have been my last sleep? God is my witness that in addressing a last farewell to Clementina, I never hoped to see her again. Shall I then see you once more, oh, sweet and confiding Clementina, the best of wives, and probably of mothers? What do I say? I do see her now; my eyes do not deceive me! There she is, just as I left her! Clementina, to my arms! to my heart! What nonsense have you been dunning into my ears? Napoleon is not dead, and the world has not grown forty-six years older, since Clementina is still the same!"

Léon Renault's betrothed had just entered the room at this moment, and she remained petrified on being thus accosted by the colonel.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GAME OF LOVE AND WAR.

As Clementina hesitated visibly, about allowing herself to fall into his arms, Fougas, imitating Mahomet, came to the mountain. "Oh, Clementina," said he, covering her with kisses, "once more the kindly Fates restore you to my affection! I find again the companion of my life, and the mother of my child!"

The astonished young girl never even thought of defending herself. Fortunately Léon tore her from the colonel's embrace, and interposed himself as a man bent upon claiming his own property.

"Sir," cried he, clenching his fists, "you are making a tremendous mistake if you think you know mademoiselle. She does not belong to your generation, but to ours. She is not your betrothed, but mine; she never was the mother of your child, and I have every reason to hope she may be the mother of mine."

Fougas was made of iron. He seized his rival by the arm, made him spin round like a top, and again placed himself before the young girl. "Are you Clementina?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You are all witness that she is my Clementina."

Léon returned to the charge, and caught the colonel by the collar of his coat, at the risk of being dashed against the wall. "Enough of this farce," cried he. "You don't surely intend to lay claim to every Clementina in the world? This young

lady is called Clementina Sambuco. She was born at Martinique, where you have never set foot, if one may believe the tale you told just now. She is eighteen."

"And the other one, too."

"The other one! Why, then she must be at least sixty-four by this time; since she was eighteen in 1813! Mademoiselle Sambuco comes of a respectable and well-known family. Her father, M. Sambuco, was a magistrate; her grandfather belonged to the Ministry of War. You see she is in no way connected with you, and common sense and politeness—to say nothing of gratitude—should prompt you to leave her in peace." He pushed away the colonel in his turn, and made him fall into an arm-chair.

Fongas rebounded, as if he had fallen on a thousand springs, but Clementina stopped him with a smiling gesture. "Sir," she said, in her most caressing tones, "don't be angry with Léon; he loves me."

"All the more reason, by Jove!" he exclaimed. Nevertheless he calmed himself, made the young girl sit down by him, and gazed at her with the greatest attention.

"It is surely she!" he at length observed. "My memory, my eyes, my heart, everything within me recognises her, and tells me it is she! And yet the testimony of these men, the time that has elapsed, the difference of locality, in a word, evidence itself seems to take me to task and convict me of error. Can two women really resemble each other so exactly? Am I the victim of a mental delusion? Have I only recovered my life to lose my senses? No! I recognise myself; I am what I was before; my clear and steadfast judgment guides me without trouble or hesitation in this world, new and disorganised as I find it. There is only one point on which my reason wavers. Clementina, I seem to see thee again, and yet thou art not thyself! Well, no matter, after all! If the hand of destiny which has snatched me from the

tomb, presents me on my awakening with the *fac-simile* of her I loved, it is, doubtless, because it is intended that I should recover, one by one, all the blessings I had lost. In a few days, my epaulets; to-morrow, the standard of the 23rd regiment of the line; to-day, the charming face which made my heart beat for the first time. Thou living image of the smiling past, behold me at thy feet—be my wife!" This man of impulse put his words into action, and the spectators of this unexpected scene looked on with eyes of astonishment.

But Clementina's aunt, the severe Mademoiselle Sambuco, thought it was quite time to show her authority. She extended her long, withered hands towards Fongas, jerked him to his feet, and said to him in her sharpest tone of reproof—"Enough, sir; it is time to put an end to this most scandalous farce. I have already promised and given my niece to another. Learn that the day after to-morrow, on the 19th, she will marry M. Léon Renault, your benefactor."

"And I shall oppose it; do you hear that, old lady; and if she persists in marrying this fellow I shall—"

"What will you do?"

"I shall curse her."

Léon could not help laughing; the malediction of this colonel of twenty-four seemed to him more comical than alarming.

But Clementina turned pale, burst into tears, and fell in turn at the colonel's feet. "Sir," cried she, kissing his hands, "do not overwhelm a poor girl who reveres you, who loves you, who will even sacrifice her happiness to your wishes. By every mark of affection I have bestowed on you for the last month, by the tears I have shed on your coffin, by the respectful zeal that made me hasten your resuscitation, I implore you to pardon our offence. I will not marry Léon if you forbid me to do so; I will do anything you

please ; nay, I will obey you in everything, but for pity's sake, spare me your curse."

"Embrace me," said Fougas. "You yield—I forgive you." Clementina got up, radiant with joy, and held out to him her pure white forehead.

The stupefaction of the witnesses, especially those most interested, is more easily imagined than described. An ex-mummy dictating laws, breaking off marriages and enforcing his will in the house ! Pretty little Clementina, usually so reasonable, so obedient, so glad to marry Léon, sacrificing all at once her happiness, nay, even her duty, to the caprice of an intruder !

M. Nibor confessed it was enough to make one go mad. As to Léon, he would have dashed his head against the wall if his mother had not restrained him. "Ah, my poor child," cried she, "why did you ever bring us that thing from Berlin ?"

"It is my fault," said M. Renault.

"No," replied Dr. Martout, "it is mine."

The members of the Parisian Commission argued with M. Rollon on the novelty of the case. "Had they resuscitated a madman ? Had the revivification produced some disorder in the nervous system ? Was it the amount of wine taken during the first meal which had caused a rush of blood to the head ? What a strange autopsy it would be if they could dissect M. Fougas there and then !"

"You would only have your trouble for your pains, gentlemen," said the colonel of the 23rd. "The autopsy might perhaps explain the delirium of the unfortunate man, but it would never clear up the mystery of the impression he has produced on this young lady. Is it fascination, magnetism, or what ?"

Whilst the friends and relations wept, argued, and whispered around him, Fougas, serene and smiling, gazed into Clementina's eyes, who returned his loving looks.

"We must put an end to this!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Virginia, severely. "Come, Clementina."

Fougas seemed astonished. "What," said he, "does she not live here?"

"No, sir; she lives with me."

"Then I shall escort her home. My angel, will you take my arm?"

"Oh yes, with pleasure."

Léon ground his teeth. "A pretty thing! He speaks in that familiar way, and she seems to like it."

Léon looked for his hat, intending at least to accompany the aunt, but his hat was no longer there. Fougas who did not possess one of his own, had coolly taken Léon's. The poor lover put on a cap and followed Fougas and Clementina, with the highly respectable Virginia, whose arm was as sharp as a scythe.

By a coincidence which repeated itself almost daily, the colonel of cuirassiers met Clementina, who remarked to Fougas—"It is M. du Marnet; his café is at the end of our street, and he lives towards the park. I believe he is very much in love with me, but I never admired him. The only man who has ever touched my heart is Léon Renault."

"What about me?" asked Fougas.

"Oh, as to you, that is a very different kind of thing. I respect and fear you. I look upon you in the light of a good, kind parent."

"Thank you!"

"I am really telling you the truth, as far as I know my own feelings. I confess they are not very clear to me. I don't quite understand myself."

"Azure flower of innocence! how I admire thy sweet embarrassment! Let love have its own way, it will soon assume the mastery."

"I know nothing about that, it may—here we are at

home—good night ; kiss me if you like ! Good night, Léon ; don't quarrel with M. Fougas, I love him with all my heart, but I love you in a very different way, dear !”

Aunt Virginia made no reply to Fougas's good night. When the two men were alone in the street, Léon walked on without speaking till they reached the first lamp-post ; there he stopped, and resolutely facing the colonel, he said—“ Now, sir, that we are alone, let us understand each other. I don't know by what philtre or incantation you have obtained such power over my betrothed, but I know that I love her, and that she has loved me for four years, and I shall stick at nothing to retain and protect her.”

“ Friend,” replied Fougas, “ you can brave me with impunity, gratitude chains my arm ; never shall it be written in history : Peter Victor Fougas was an ingrate.”

“ Would there be more ingratitude in cutting each other's throats, than in stealing my wife from me ?”

“ Oh, my benefactor ! learn to understand and forgive. God forbid that I should marry Clementina in spite of you and her own wishes. It is from herself and you that I trust to obtain her ; think how dear she has been to me, not merely for four years as in your case, but for nearly half a century. Consider how lonely I am here below, and that her sweet face is my sole consolation. You who have restored me to life, do you forbid me to be happy ? Have you recalled me to this world only to plunge me into grief ? Tiger ! take back the life you gave, if you won't allow me to devote it to the adorable Clementina.”

“ By Jove ! my dear fellow, you are grand ! The habit of conquering must have entirely warped your judgment. My hat is on your head, you took it—well and good ! but because my future wife happens vaguely to resemble some young lady at Nancy, I must give her up to you indeed ! Not if I know it !”

"Friend, I will return you your hat whenever you buy me a new one, but don't ask me to renounce Clementina. First of all, how do you know that she will give me up?"

"I am certain of it."

"She loves me."

"You are quite mad!"

"You saw her at my feet."

"What of that? It was fear, respect, superstition, what the deuce you like to call it—anything but love!"

"We shall soon see after we have been married six months."

"But," cried Léon, "have you any right to dispose of yourself in this way? There is another Clementina—the real one—she sacrificed everything for you, honour binds you to her, can Colonel Fougas be deaf to the voice of honour?"

"You are laughing at me, how in the name of fortune can I marry a woman of sixty-four?"

"You ought to do so, if not for her sake, at least for your son's."

"My son is grown up, he must be forty-six years old; he no longer needs my help."

"He needs your name."

"I will adopt him."

"The law forbids that; you are not fifty yet, and he is not fifteen years younger than you, on the contrary he is older."

"Well, then, I will legitimise him by marrying Clementina the younger!"

"What—would you have her acknowledge a son who is double her age?"

"But then I can't acknowledge him either, and I have no mind to marry the old one. Besides, what is the good of my bothering my head about a son who may perhaps be dead?—what am I saying?—perhaps never was born! I love and

am beloved ! that is the one thing certain, and you shall be best man at my wedding."

"Not yet ! Mademoiselle Sambuco is still a minor, and my father is her guardian."

"Your father is an honourable man, and he will not be so mean as to refuse me her hand."

"At any rate he will inquire if you have position, rank, fortune to offer his ward."

"My position ? a colonel ! My rank ? a colonel ! My fortune ? the pay of a colonel ! Ah ! and those millions at Dantzic. I must not forget them ! Here we are at home, give me the will of that excellent old fellow who wore the lilac wig, give me also some volumes of history—plenty of books—especially those that speak of Napoleon."

Young Renault sorrowfully obeyed the tyrant he had given himself ; he conducted him to the best room, gave him Professor Meiser's will, a whole shelf of books from the library, and wished his mortal enemy good night. The colonel insisted on embracing him, and said—"I shall never forget that to you I owe my life and Clementina. Till to-morrow, noble and generous son of my country, till to-morrow !"

Léon went down stairs, passed through the dining-room—where Gothon was busily wiping the glasses and putting away the plate—and rejoined his father and mother, who were waiting for him in the drawing-room. All the guests were gone, and the wax lights put out ; a single lamp lit up the darkness ; and the two mandarins, immovable in their dark corner, seemed to be reflecting gravely on the caprices of fortune.

"Well," said Madame Renault.

"I have left him in his room more obstinate and madder than ever. Nevertheless I have an idea."

"So much the better," replied his father, "for we have

not one left. Grief has made us quite stupid—but above all no quarrel; these soldiers of the Empire were terrible swordsmen."

"Oh, I am not afraid of him! It is Clementina who terrifies me. With what sweetness and submission she listened to that confounded prater."

"The heart of a woman is an unfathomable abyss. But after all, what do you think of doing?"

Léon unfolded the plan he had conceived in the street during his conversation with Fougas. "The most important point just now," said he, "is to withdraw Clementina from this influence. If we can get the colonel out of the way to-morrow, perhaps reason will resume her sway, and we might be married the day after. That once over, I'll answer for the rest."

"But how are we to get rid of a maniac like that?"

"I only see one way, but it is almost sure to succeed, to work upon his ruling passion. These sort of people sometimes fancy themselves in love, when in reality it is only the smell of powder they care for. We must throw Fougas back into the current of military life. The breakfast at the colonel's to-morrow will be a good preparation. I told him to-day that the first thing he ought to do was to claim his rank and his epaulets, and he fell into the trap. He will therefore go to Paris, and may find there some old leather-breeches of his acquaintance; in any case he will re-enter the service. The duties of his profession will create a powerful diversion, he will cease to think of Clementina, whom I shall have placed in safety. We shall have to furnish him with means to travel about, but monetary sacrifices are nothing in comparison with that happiness which I hope to rescue."

Madame Renault, who was an economical woman, found fault with her son's generosity. "The colonel is an ungrateful fellow," said she, "we have already done too much

for him in restoring him to life ; let him get on as he can."

"No," expostulated the father, "we have no right to send him away unprovided for ; beneficence obliges." This deliberation, which had lasted an hour and a quarter, was interrupted by a tremendous racket. You would have thought the house was coming down.

"There he is again !" exclaimed Léon. "A sudden fit of raving madness, no doubt !" Off he ran, followed by his parents, and rushed up the stairs four steps at a time. A candle was burning outside, which Léon took up, and pushing open the door, entered the room.

Must I confess it ? Hope and joy predominated over fear --he thought himself already rid of the colonel. But the spectacle which met his sight quickly changed the current of his ideas, and this inconsolable lover burst out laughing like a madman. The sound of kicks, fisticuffs and blows, a shapeless mass rolling on the floor in the throes of a desperate conflict ; that was all he could see and hear at first. Afterwards he recognised Fougas who, discovering by the light of the candle, that he had been wrestling with Gothon, retired, piteous and confused, to bed.

The colonel had gone to sleep over the history of Napoleon, without extinguishing his candle, and Gothon, having finished her work, saw the light under his door, when suddenly she remembered poor Baptiste, who was, perhaps, still groaning in purgatory for having allowed himself to fall from the roof of a house. She thought that the colonel might be able to give her some news of her lover, and rapped at the door several times ; at first, gently, afterwards, more loudly. The colonel's silence and the lighted candle made the faithful servant smell danger ; the curtains might take fire, and the safety of the whole house be endangered. So she put down her own candle, opened the door, and came in on tip-

toe to extinguish the light. But whether the eyes of the sleeper had vaguely seen a shadow flitting by, or whether Gothon, being very stout and awkward, had made one of the boards creak, Fougas, half awake, hearing a rustling of petticoats, imagined an adventure in the style of those which used to enliven garrison life during the first Empire, and stretched out his arms blindly, calling on Clementina. Gothon, caught hold of by the hair and the waist, replied by so vigorous a cuff, that the colonel thought himself attacked by a man. Reprisal followed on reprisal, and they finished by grappling with each other, and rolling on the floor.

The one to feel ashamed was M. Fougas. Gothon went off to bed, rather the worse for bruises; the Renault family reasoned with the colonel, and obtained nearly all they demanded. He promised to set out the next day, accepted, as a loan, the sum of money they offered him, and swore never to return till he had recovered his epaulets, and pocketed the Dantzic inheritance. "Then," said he, "I shall marry Clementina." On that point it was deemed useless to argue with him; it was an idea too firmly rooted.

Every one in the house slept soundly that night: the Renaults because they had spent three sleepless nights, Fougas and Gothon because they had exhausted each other with blows, and young Célestin because he had drained all the glasses.

The next morning Colonel Rollon came to ascertain if Fougas was in a fit state to breakfast with him; he was afraid he might find him under cold water discipline. Not at all! The madman of the evening before was as gentle as a lamb, and fresh as a daisy. He was shaving with Léon's razors, and humming an air by Nicolo. He was delightful with his hosts, and promised Gothon to give her an annuity from Herr Meiser's property.

As soon as Fougas had gone off to the breakfast, Léon ran

to Clementina's house. "Everything is going on splendidly," said he. "The colonel is much more reasonable; he has promised to leave to-day for Paris. So we can be married to-morrow."

Mademoiselle Virginia very much approved of this plan, not only because she had made great preparations for the wedding, but also because a marriage deferred is always the talk of the town. The letters of invitation were already posted, the Mayor had been duly informed, the chapel of the Virgin had been engaged in the parish church. To countermand all this on account of the whim of a ghost and a lunatic was to fly in the face of society and heaven itself.

Clementina's only answer was her tears. She never could be happy unless she did marry Léon, but she would rather die, she said, than give him her hand without M. Fougas's permission. She promised to implore his consent upon her knees, and obtain it by force of entreaty.

"But suppose he should refuse? and this is more than likely."

"I will go on beseeching him till he says yes."

Every one joined in trying to convince her of her folly, Léon, her aunt, M. and Madame Renault, and all the mutual friends of the two houses. She gave in at last; but at that very moment the door opened, and M. Audret rushed into the drawing-room, exclaiming—

"Here is a fine piece of news! Colonel Fougas and M. du Marrot are going to fight to-morrow."

The young girl fell, as if shot, into Léon's arms. "It is a punishment on me," she exclaimed, "and the chastisement of my wickedness has not tarried. Will you still force me to obey you? Shall I be dragged to the altar, in opposition to his wishes, at the very moment, perhaps, when he is risking his life?"

No one dared insist any longer, seeing her in such a

pitiable state, but Léon inwardly hoped that fortune might favour the colonel of cuirassiers. That he was wrong, I own, but where is the lover sufficiently virtuous to throw the first stone at him? We will now relate how the handsome Fougas had spent his day.

At ten o'clock in the morning the two junior captains of the 23rd came to escort him with all due ceremony to their colonel's house. M. Rollon lived in a little palace built during the imperial dynasty. A marble slab over the gateway still bore this inscription, "Ministry of Finance," memento of those glorious times when the court of Napoleon followed its sovereign to Fontainebleau!

Colonel Rollon, the lieutenant-colonel, the fat major, the three chiefs of battalions, the surgeon-major, and ten or twelve officers were awaiting outside the house the arrival of this illustrious guest from the other world. The flag had been planted in the middle of the courtyard, guarded by an ensign and a squad of non-commissioned officers selected for this honour. The band of the regiment filled up the back-ground of the picture, at the entrance of the garden. Eight trophies of arms, improvised that very morning by the armourers of the corps, embellished the walls and the railings. A company of grenadiers, with arms at rest, awaited his arrival.

As soon as Fougas entered, the band began to play the famous "*Partant pour la Syrie*," the grenadiers presented arms, the drums beat, the non-commissioned officers and soldiers cried out, "Long live Colonel Fougas!" and the officers hastened in a body towards the ancestor of their regiment. All this was neither regular, nor according to strict discipline, but something must be forgiven to these brave soldiers who had just recovered an ancestor. It was to them a little debauch of glory.

The hero of the day pressed the colonel's hand and those

of his officers with as much warmth as if he was welcoming old friends. He bowed cordially to the non-commissioned officers and the soldiers, walked up to the flag, went down on one knee, then rising proudly, seized the staff, and turning to the attentive crowd, began as follows—

“ Friends, it is under the shadow of our flag that a soldier of France, after forty-six years exile, again finds his family. All honour be to thee, symbol of our country—old companion of our victories, heroic mainstay in our misfortunes ! Thy radiant eagle has soared over Europe cowering and prostrate. Thy battered eagle struggled still against fortune, and spread terror among potentates ! All honour be to thee who hast led us on to glory, to thee who hast protected us from the apathy of despair ! I have seen thee always unfurled in the midst of supreme danger, proud flag of my country ! Men fell around thee like ears of corn before the sickle of the reaper ; thou alone lifted up thy proud and invincible front to the enemy. Bullets and balls have pierced thee with wounds, but never has an audacious stranger dared to put his hand on thee. May the future wreath thy brow with fresh laurels ; mayest thou conquer new and vast kingdoms, which no adverse fate shall wrest from us. The time of great deeds is going to revive again ; believe in the voice of a warrior who issues from the grave to say to you, ‘ Forward ! ’ Yes, I swear it by the ashes of him who commanded us at Wagram ! There are still proud days in store for France as long as you shelter under your glorious folds the fortunes of the 23rd regiment ! ”

This military and patriotic eloquence took every heart by storm. Fougas was cheered, congratulated, embraced, and almost carried in triumph to the banqueting-room.

Seated at table, facing M. Rollon, as if he had been a second master of the house, he breakfasted well, talked a good deal, and drank still more. One sometimes meets in

the world men who are intoxicated without drinking. Fougas was not one of these; he never got drunk under three bottles; indeed, he frequently passed that limit without knocking under.

The toasts which were given at dessert were remarkable for their energy and cordiality. I should like to cite them one after the other, but I find they would take up too much space, and that the last ones, which were the most touching, were not of a Voltairian clearness.

They rose from table at two o'clock, and went in a body to the military café, where the officers of the 23rd had ordered punch at their own expense for the two colonels. They had also invited the superior officers of the regiment of cuirassiers, from a feeling of what was due to etiquette.

Fougas, who had drank more himself than a whole battalion of Swiss, was shaking hands all round; but through the mist which obscured his faculties, he recognised M. du Marnet, and made a wry face. Amongst officers, and especially those of different branches of the service, politeness is, perhaps, a little exaggerated, etiquette rather strict, and self-love somewhat easily offended. M. du Marnet, who was a man of unexceptionable good breeding, understood at once, by Fougas's manner, that he was unfriendly towards him.

The punch was brought in all ablaze! allowed to go out, and was helped round with a large ladle into at least sixty glasses. Fougas touched glasses with every one^a but M. du Marnet. The conversation, which was noisy and diffuse, unfortunately turned upon some professional point. A commandant of cuirassiers asked Fougas if he had seen that fine charge of Bordesouille's, which hurled the Austrians into the valley of Plauen.

Fougas had personally known General Bordesouille, and witnessed that grand manœuvre of heavy cavalry, which de-

cided the victory of Dresden ; but, in order to annoy M. du Marnet, he affected an air of ignorance and indifference. "In our time," said he, "the cavalry was put to work after the battle. We made use of it to pursue the enemy whom we had dispersed."

There was a general outcry at this, and, by way of protest, the glorious name of Murat was quoted. "No doubt, no doubt," said Fougas, nodding his head, "Murat was a good general in his little sphere ; he was quite equal to what was expected of him ! But if the cavalry had Murat, the infantry had Napoleon !"

M. du Marnet judiciously observed that Napoleon, if, indeed, he were to be claimed by any one particular branch, belonged really to the artillery.

"As you please, sir," said Fougas, "the artillery and the infantry. Artillery in the distance, infantry at close quarters, cavalry aside."

"Excuse me again," resumed M. du Marnet, "you mean on the side, which is quite another thing."

"On the side—aside—it's all the same to me ! For my part, were I commander-in-chief, I should put the cavalry to one side."

Several cavalry officers now threw themselves into the discussion ; but M. du Marnet gave them quietly to understand that he wished to discuss the matter with Fougas himself only. "And why, may I ask, would you do away with the cavalry ?"

"Because a cavalry man is only half a soldier."

"Half a soldier ?"

"Yes, sir ; and the proof is, that government is obliged to buy four or five hundred francs worth of horseflesh to complete him. Suppose the horse receives a gun-shot or bayonet wound, the man is of no further good. Have you ever seen a cavalry soldier on foot ? Ey Jove, it is a caution !"

"I see myself every day on foot, and have never considered myself ridiculous."

"Oh, I am too polite to contradict you!"

"And I, sir, am too just to oppose one paradox to another. What would you think of my logic if I were to say to you (the idea is not my own; I found it in a book), if I were to say to you, 'I admire the infantry, but the foot-soldier is only half a soldier—a disinherited man, an invalid, deprived of that very natural complement of a warrior which we call a horse? I admire his courage, I admit that he may be of use in warfare, but, after all, poor devil, he has only his two legs to go upon, while we rejoice in four!' You consider a cavalry soldier ridiculous on foot, but does a linesman always cut a very brilliant figure on horseback? I have seen admirable infantry captains, who were cruelly embarrassed when they were made majors! They have been heard to say, 'All very well to rise in rank, but not so easy to rise in the saddle!'"

This old joke amused the audience for a moment; they laughed, and Fongas grew more and more irritable. "In my time," said he, "a foot-soldier became a good horseman in twenty-four hours; and, if any one will take a ride with me, sword in hand, I will show him what the infantry is made of."

"Sir," coldly replied M. du Marnet, "I hope that opportunity will be afforded you in time of war. It is then that a true soldier shows his ability and courage. Cavalry or infantry, we all belong to France. She it is I now toast, sir, and I hope you will not refuse to clink your glass against mine to France."

Well spoken and well reasoned. In truth the clinking of the glasses showed that M. du Marnet had won his cause. Fongas himself drew near his adversary, and frankly drank with him, but he whispered in his ear, speaking very thickly—"It is my turn to hope you will not refuse the little encounter which I had the honour of just now proposing to you?"

"As you please," returned the colonel of cuirassiers.

The ghost, more drunk than ever, left the assembly with two officers whom he had picked out at random. He declared to them that he considered himself insulted by M. du Marnet; that the challenge had been offered and accepted, and that it was a settled thing. "All the more," added he, because there is a lady in the case! These are my conditions—they are all to the honour of the infantry, the army, and France! We will fight on horseback, stripped to the waist, mounted on two bare-backed steeds, the weapons to be cavalry sabres; the first blood drawn to decide the issue. I only want to correct a fop, I do not wish to deprive the country of a soldier."

These conditions were pronounced absurd by the seconds of M. du Marnet, but were, nevertheless, accepted; for military honour requires one to brave all dangers even though absurd.

Fougas passed the remainder of the day in driving the Renaults nearly wild. Aware of the power he possessed over Clementina, he made known his wishes; swore he would have Clementina for his wife, as soon as he had recovered his rank, family, and fortune, and forbade her disposing of herself till that time. He quarrelled outright with Léon and his parents, refused their assistance, and left the house, after a mutual exchange of hard words.

Léon ended by saying he would only relinquish Clementina with his life. The colonel shrugged his shoulders, and took himself off, without giving a thought to the clothes of the father and the son's hat, which he carried away with him. He borrowed five hundred francs from Colonel Rollon, took a room at the Hôtel du Cadran Bleu, went to bed without his supper, and slept straight off the reel till the arrival of the seconds.

There was no need to jog his memory as to the events of

the day before. The drowsiness of punch and sleep combined passed off in a second. Plunging his head and hands into a bucket of cold water he said—"There, my toilet is over. Long live the Emperor! Let us go and take up our position."

The ground chosen by common consent was the exercise ground. It is a sandy plain in the midst of the forest, some distance from the town. All the officers of the garrison had gone there of their own accord; no need to invite any of them. More than one soldier stole there surreptitiously, and took up his position in a tree. Even the gendarmery itself adorned this family gathering with its presence. They went to witness not only an heroic tournament between cavalry and infantry, but also between the old army and the new. The spectacle answered fully the expectation of the spectators. No one had any desire to hiss the performance, and every one had enough for his money. Precisely at nine o'clock the combatants entered the lists, with their four seconds and the umpire. Fongas, stripped to the waist, was as handsome as a heathen god. His supple and muscular frame, his proud and confident air, the manly grace of his movements met with warm applause. As he entered, he caused his English horse to prance and rear while he lowered the point of his sword, and bowed to the spectators.

M. du Marnet, who was fair, hairy, strong, and modelled like the Indian Bacchus, rather than an Achilles, had a slight frown of annoyance on his brow. It was easy to see that this duel *in naturabilis* fought in the sight of his own officers, appeared to him useless and even ridiculous. His steed was a Percheron half-bred, strong and full of spirit.

Fongas's seconds rode rather badly, and divided their attention between the combat and their stirrups. M. du Marnet had chosen the two best horsemen in his regiment—

the commandant of a squadron and a captain commandant. The umpire was Colonel Rollon, also a first-rate horseman.

As soon as the latter gave the signal, Fougas rushed at his adversary, lowering the point of his weapon like a cavalry soldier charging a square of infantry. But he stopped short at three horse lengths, and described seven or eight rapid circles round M. du Marnet, like an Arab in a fantasia. M. du Marnet, obliged to turn round and defend himself on all sides, put spurs to his horse, broke the circle, rode off some distance, and threatened to perform the same manœuvre around Fougas, but the ghost did not wait for him. He galloped off at full speed, making the tour of the hippodrome, all the while pursued by M. du Marnet.

The cuirassier being heavier, and riding a less swift animal, was soon distanced; he revenged himself by crying out to Fougas—"You should have let me know it was a race and not a combat, and I would have brought my whip and not my sabre."

But Fougas was already upon him, furious and breathless. "Wait for me," shouted he. "I have shown you the horseman, now you shall see the soldier."

And he aimed a thrust with the point of his sword which would have gone through his adversary as through a hoop if M. du Marnet had not parried the thrust in time. He responded by a pretty blow in *carte*, sufficiently powerful to have cut the invincible Fougas in two. But the latter, as active as a monkey, escaped it by letting himself slip off to the ground and remounting again in an instant.

"Allow me to compliment you," said M. du Marnet, "it could not have been better done at a circus."

"Or on the battle-field either," retorted the other. "Ah, scoundrel! You try to chaff the old army? Take that—missed!—thanks for the return, but it was not quite good enough. I shall not die of that!—there! there! there!

So you pretend that a foot-soldier is a man incomplete—we will make you incomplete fast enough! Here's a thrust for you! Ah, he has parried it! He imagines no doubt that he will be hanging about under Clementina's window this evening. There, take that for Clementina—and that for the infantry. Will you parry that, too? Yes, traitor!—and that one?—again? You will parry them all, then, confound you! Victory!—at last, my fine gentleman, your blood flows! What have I done! To the devil with my sword, horse, everything! Doctor! Doctor! come quickly! Sir, let me receive you in my arms! Brute that I am! as if all soldiers were not brothers! Friend, forgive me—I would buy back every drop of your blood by shedding my own! Miserable Fougas, incapable of mastering his fierce passions! Oh, Esculapius of Mars! tell me that the thread of his life is not cut short! I could not survive him, for he is a brave man!”

M. du Marnet had a tremendous gash along the left arm and side, and the blood flowed in a frightful manner. The surgeon, who had provided himself with styptics, made all haste to stop the hæmorrhage. The wound was long, but not deep, and there was every chance of its healing in a day or two. Fougas himself carried his adversary to his carriage, and that was by no means a light matter. He insisted upon accompanying the two officers who took M. du Marnet home; he overpowered the wounded man with his protests, swearing eternal friendship the whole way. Arrived there, he put him to bed, embraced him, deluged him with his tears, and never left till he heard him snoring.

It was then striking six o'clock. He went off to dine at his hotel with the umpire and his two seconds, whom he had invited after the duel, entertained them magnificently, and got gloriously drunk himself.

CHAPTER XV.

WHERE IT WILL BE SEEN THAT THE DISTANCE IS NOT GREAT
FROM THE CAPITOL TO THE TARPEIAN ROCK.

THE next day after having called on M. du Marnet, Fougas wrote thus to Clementina—

“Light of my life, I quit this spot which has witnessed my fatal courage and is the depository of my love. It is towards the heart of the capital, to the foot of the throne that I bend my steps. Should the great war-god’s successor not prove insensible to the voice of that blood which flows through his veins, he will give me back my sword, and my epaulets, that I may lay them at thy feet. Only be faithful to me and hope; may these lines serve as a talisman against the dangers which threaten thy independence. O my Clementina! keep yourself for me.

“VICTOR FOUGAS.”

Clementina made him no reply, but just as he was getting into the railway carriage he was accosted by a commissionaire, who put into his hand a pretty red leather pocket-book, and ran off with all speed. The pocket-book, which was quite new and strong and securely fastened, contained 1,200 francs, in bank notes, all the young girl’s savings. Fougas had no time to reflect upon this delicate matter, he was pushed into a carriage, the engine whistled, and the train started.

The colone found himself recalling all the different events

which had succeeded each other in his life, during less than a week's time. His arrest on the icy Vistula, his sentence of death, his captivity in the tower of Liebenfeld, his awakening at Fontainebleau, the invasion of 1814, the return from Elba, the hundred days, the deaths of the Emperor and the King of Rome, the Bonapartist restoration of 1852, the meeting with the young girl so closely resembling Clementina Pichon, the standard of the 23rd, the duel with the colonel of cuirassiers, all, it seemed to Fougas, had been pressed into the short space of four days ! The night extending from the 11th November, 1813, to the 17th August, 1859, appeared to him shorter than the rest, for it was the only time he ever remembered to have had an uninterrupted and dreamless sleep.

A mind less active, a heart less warm, would perhaps have lapsed into a state of semi-melancholy, for it stands to reason that a man who has slept for forty-six years, must feel rather like a fish out of water when he returns to his country. Not a relation, not a friend, not a single familiar countenance on the face of the earth ! Add to that, numberless novel words, ideas, customs and inventions, which make him feel the want of a guide, and demonstrate to him how completely he is a stranger. But Fougas on re-opening his eyes had thrown himself into the very midst of action, according to the precepts of Horace. He had improvised for himself friends, enemies, a lady-love, a rival. Fontainebleau, his second birth-place, was for the time the chief town of his existence, he felt that there he was liked, hated, feared, admired, known, in fact. He felt sure that in that sub-prefecture, at any rate, his name could never be pronounced in the future without awakening an echo. But what drew him by still closer ties to modern times was his firmly established relationship with the great family of the army. Wherever the French flag floats, a soldier, be he young or old, always feels at home. Round this steeple of the

mother country, far dearer and more sacred than the steeple of his village, language, ideas, institutions, undergo but little change. Men may die, but they are replaced by others, who are like them, who think, speak, act in the same manner, who are not satisfied with merely donning the uniform of their predecessors, but who also inherit their memories, their past glory, their traditions, jokes and even certain intonations of voice. This explains in some measure the sudden friendship of Fongas for the new colonel of the 23rd, after the first pangs of jealousy, and the warm sympathy he showed with M. du Marnet as soon as he saw his blood flow. Soldiers' quarrels are like family discussions, they never obliterate the ties of relationship.

Firmly persuaded that he was not alone in the world, Fongas delighted in every new object that civilization presented to his gaze. The speed of the railway absolutely intoxicated him, he felt quite enthusiastic about this steam power of which the theory was a dead letter to him, but whose results he still could follow.

"With a thousand engines like this, two thousand rifled cannons, and two hundred thousand such fellows as myself, Napoleon would have conquered the world in six weeks. Why does not this young man, who is now on the throne, make use of the instruments he has to hand? Perhaps he has never thought about it. Very good, I am going to see him. If he appears to me to be a capable person, I will give him the benefit of my ideas, he will then make me his minister of war, and forward—march!"

He had made inquiries about the long wires which run from post to post, all the length of the line. "By Jove!" exclaimed he, "they are swift and discreet aides-de-camps, only put all that into the hands of a staff-major like Berthier, the universe might be enclosed as if caught in a net, by the mere will of one man alone!"

His meditations were interrupted a couple of miles from Melun by the sound of a foreign tongue. He pricked up his ears, then bounded in his corner like a man who has sat down on a bundle of thorns. Horror of horrors ! It was English ! One of those monsters who had assassinated Napoleon at St. Helena in order to ensure the monopoly of cotton, had just entered the compartment, with a pretty wife and two beautiful children. "Guard—stop !" cried Fougas, leaning half of his body out of the window.

"Sir," said the Englishman, in good French, "I advise you to wait patiently till we come to the next station. The guard does not hear you, and you are running a risk of falling out. If I can do anything for you in the meantime, I have a flask of brandy, and a travelling medicine chest."

"No, sir," replied Fougas in the surliest tone, "I want nothing, and I would rather die than accept anything from an Englishman ! I called the guard, because I wished to change carriages, and rid my eyes of seeing an enemy of the Emperor's !"

"I assure you, sir," returned the Englishman, "that I am by no means an enemy of the Emperor's. I had the honour of being received by him when he lived in London ; he has even condescended to stay a few days with me at my country house in Lancashire."

"So much the better for you, if that young man is good enough to forget what you have done to his family, but I can never pardon your crimes towards my country."

Thereupon, having reached the next station, Fougas opened the door, and dashed into another compartment, where he found himself alone with two young men who had not English physiognomies, and who spoke French with the purest Touraine accent. They each wore a signet ring on their little finger, so that no one could be ignorant of their standing as gentlemen. Fougas was too plebeian to care much

for noble birth, but coming from a compartment occupied by English, he was only too happy to meet two Frenchmen.

"Friends," said he, bending towards them with a cordial smile, "we are children of the same mother. Good-day to you, your appearance re-invigorates me."

The two young fellows stared, half bowed, and then continued their conversation without making any response to Fougas's advances.

"So that, my dear Astophe," said one, "you have seen the King at Frohsdorf?"

"Yes, my good Americ, and he received me with the most touching kindness. 'Viscount,' said he, 'you come of a race well known for its fidelity. We will remember you when God pleases to re-establish us on the throne of our ancestors. Tell our brave nobles in Touraine that we recommend ourselves to their prayers, and that we shall not forget them in ours.'"

"Pitt and Coburg!" hissed Fougas between his teeth, "here are two young fellows who are conspiring with Condé's army. But patience!" He clenched his fists, and listened attentively.

"He said nothing to you about politics?"

"A few words of no significance; between ourselves, I don't think he troubles himself much about them, he is waiting for what may happen."

"He won't have to wait much longer."

"Who knows?"

"What do you mean? who knows? The Empire can't last six months longer. Monseigneur de Montereau was saying so only last Monday, at my aunt's the canoness."

"Well, I will give them a year, because this Italian campaign has secured them a certain prestige among the lower class. Oh, I did not hesitate to tell the King so."

"On my honour, gentlemen, this is too much," interrupted

Fougas. "Can it be possible that Frenchmen talk like this in France, of her institutions? Go back to your master and tell him that the Empire is eternal, because it is based on the granite of popular support, and cemented with the blood of heroes! And if the King should ask who told you so, you may answer it was Colonel Fougas, who was decorated at Wagram by the hand of the Emperor himself."

The two young men looked at each other, exchanged smiles, and the viscount said to the marquis in English—"Who is this?"

"A madman."

"No, my dear fellow, a mad dog."

"Nothing else."

"That's right, gentlemen," shouted the colonel, indignantly, "speak English, you are just fit for that."

Again he changed his compartment at the next station, and fell in with a group of young artists. He called them the disciples of Xeuixis, and asked them for news of Gérard, Gros and David. These young fellows thought it rather a good joke, and recommended him to go and see Talma in the last tragedy of Arnault's.

The fortifications of Paris astonished him a good deal, and shocked him a little. "I don't like that," said he to his neighbour, "the true ramparts of the capital should be the bravery of a great people. To throw up fortifications around Paris is to tell the enemy in as many words that France is not impregnable."

At last the train stopped at the Mazas terminus. The colonel, who had no luggage, walked off proudly with his hands in his pockets, in search of the Hôtel de Nantes. Having passed three months in Paris in the year 1810, he felt sure he could find his way about the city, and accordingly he very soon lost it. But in the various quarters he passed through at random, he admired the great changes

that had been made during his absence. Fongas adored long, wide streets, with fine houses in an unbroken line of uniformity; he was obliged to acknowledge that the Parisian standard came very nearly up to his ideal; it was not yet absolutely perfect, but what great progress had been made!

By an excusable delusion he stopped twenty times and bowed to people whose faces he thought familiar to him, but the people themselves made no response. After walking for five hours he reached the Place du Carrousel. The Hôtel de Nantes was no longer there, but in its stead they had completed the Louvre. Fongas lost at least a quarter of an hour in contemplation of this building, and half an hour more in looking at two zouaves of the guard, who were playing at picquet. He inquired if the Emperor was in Paris, and they pointed to the flag which floated over the palace of the Tuileries.

"Good," said he, "but first I must get a new rig out."

He engaged a room in an hotel in the Rue St. Honoré, and asked a waiter who was the best tailor in Paris. The waiter lent him a commercial directory, and Fongas looked out the Emperor's boot maker, his shirt maker, his hatter, his hair dresser, and his glover! He wrote down their names in the pocket book Clementina had given him, and then hired a carriage and set out.

As he had a small well-shaped foot, he experienced no difficulty in finding ready-made boots. The linen he required was also promised him in the course of the evening. But when he explained to the hatter the kind of head-gear he wished to wear, he met with difficulties. His ideal was an enormous hat, wide at the top and narrow towards the base, turned up at the sides, bent down behind and before, in fact the historical article to which Bolivar in former times gave his name. To find this the shop had to be ransacked and ancient boards explored and turned over.

"At last," cried the hatter, "here is what you want, if it is for a theatrical costume, you are just suited, the ludicrous effect is perfect."

Fougas replied drily that this style of hat was much less ridiculous to his mind than those which he saw every one wearing in the streets of Paris.

At the great tailor's, in the Rue de la Paix, there was nearly a battle royal. "No, sir," said Alfred, "I refuse to make you a frogged surtout and cossack trousers. Go to Babin's or Moreau's if you want a costume for the carnival, but never shall it be said that so well made a man as yourself was turned out by us like a caricature."

"Hang it all," shouted Fougas, "you may be a head taller than myself, sir tailor, but I am a colonel of the great Empire, and it ill becoms a drum-major to give orders to his colonel!"

The obstinate fellow would always have his own way. They took his measure, and promised to send him his clothes in twenty-four hours, made according to the fashion of 1813. They showed him various cloths to choose from, amongst them English fabrics which he refused with disdain. "The blue cloth of France," said he, "and made in France, is what I wish for; and mind you cut the clothes out so that every one seeing me in mufti will exclaim, There goes a soldier!"

Officers of our day have quite a contrary idea, they try as much as possible to look like any other gentleman when they are in mufti.

In the Rue de Richelieu, Fougas ordered a black satin stock, which entirely hid his shirt, and came up to his ears; then he went on to the Palais Royal, walked into a well-known restaurant, and ordered dinner. As he had breakfasted standing in a pastry cook's shop on the boulevard, his appetite, sharpened by his walk, did wonders. He drank and ate as at Fontainebleau, but when the bill had to be paid,

it seemed to him rather difficult of digestion, it was a matter of a hundred francs and some centimes. "The deuce," said he, "how dear living has become in Paris!"

The brandy alone in his bill made an item of nine francs. They had placed before him the ordinary bottle and a glass like a thimble. This plaything diverted Fougas, and he amused himself by filling and emptying it a dozen times. In spite of all this, when he rose from table he was only pleasantly lively, nothing more. It came into his head to go and try his luck at No. 113, but a bottle merchant who lived in the house, informed him that gambling had been given up in France for the last thirty years. He thereupon went to the Théâtre Français, hoping that the Emperor's actors might be performing some grand tragedy, but the play-bill displeased him. New pieces were being played by new actors! No Talma, Fleury, Thénard, Baptiste, Mademoiselle Mars, nor Mademoiselle Rancourt! At last he decided upon the Opera, where "Charles VI." was being performed. The music astonished him, he was not used to such a din off the battle-field, but soon his ear became accustomed to the noise of the instruments. The fatigues of the day, the repose of a comfortable seat, the effects of his dinner, all combined to make him sleepy, but suddenly he sprang into wakefulness as these words reached his ear—

"War to the tyrant! never, never in France,
• Never shall the English reign!"

"No," cried he, stretching out his arms towards the stage, "never! Let us all swear it on the altar of our country! May perfidious Albion perish, and long live the Emperor!"

The pit and the orchestra rose to a man, not to join in Fougas's patriotic outburst, but to call him to order. After the act was over, a commissary of police whispered in his ear that a gentleman who had dined in that fashion ought to

go quietly to bed, and not disturb a representation at the Opera!

He replied that he had only had his usual dinner, and that this patriotic demonstration proceeded from the heart, and not from the stomach. "But," continued he, "since, in this palace of idle luxury, hatred of an enemy is brauded as a crime, I shall go and breathe a purer atmosphere, and pay my homage to the fane of Glory before retiring to rest."

"You will do well," said the police agent.

Away he stalked, more proud and erect than ever, gained the boulevards, and hastened to the corinthian temple, where they terminate. On the way, he was struck with admiration at the lighting of the city. M. Martout had explained to him the manufacture of gas, of which he had not understood a syllable, but this brilliant light was a real feast to his eyes.

As soon as he arrived at the edifice which commands the entrance of the Rue Royale, he stopped on the pavement, and, after collecting his thoughts for a moment, began this exordium—"O Inspirer of all noble deeds, widow of the great conqueror of Europe, receive, oh Glory! the homage of thy devoted lover, Victor Fougas! For thy sake I have endured hunger, heat and cold, and eaten the most faithful of steeds. For thee I am ready to brave fresh perils, and to find myself face to face with death in any field of battle. I prefer thee to riches, happiness and power; do not reject the heart I offer thee, nor the life I would willingly sacrifice! In return for so much devotion, I only ask a smile from thy eyes, and a laurel thrown by thy hands!"

This prayer, in all its fervour, may, perhaps, have reached the ears of Mary Magdalen, patron saint of the ex-temple of Glory! In like manner, the purchaser of an estate sometimes receives a letter intended for the former owner.

Fougas returned by the Rue de la Paix and the Place Vendôme, and bowed in passing to the only face he had really

recognised since he came to Paris. The new costume of Napoleon at the top of the column did not displease him. He preferred the little cocked hat to the crown, and the grey great coat to the theatrical mantle. He spent a restless night ; a thousand disconnected projects passed through his mind ; he prepared the conversation he intended to hold with the Emperor ; fell asleep, and awoke in a fright lest some valuable idea should suddenly vanish. Twenty times, at least, he lighted and extinguished his candle. The remembrance of Clementina mingled at times with dreams of war and political utopias ; but I am bound to confess the face of the young girl was quite in the background of the scene.

Long as the night had seemed to him, the next morning was all too short. The idea of seeing the Emperor face to face intoxicated and froze him by turns. One moment he hoped that some omission on the part of a tradesman might furnish him with a legitimate excuse for postponing his visit to the following day. But every one showed a most disappointing exactitude. At noon precisely, the cossack pantaloons, and the frogged and braided surtout, were lying at the foot of the bed, in close companionship with the famous hat *à la* Bolivar.

"I will dress myself," said Fougas ; "perhaps this young man may not be at home, in which case I will leave my name, and wait till he sends for me."

He adorned himself after his own particular fashion, and it may seem incredible to my fair readers, that Fougas, in his black satin stock and braided surtout, was neither ugly nor ridiculous. His great height and fine figure, his haughty and decided cast of features, his quick movements, were all in harmony with the costume of former times. He was peculiar, that was all.

To give himself a little Dutch courage, he went into a restaurant, ate four cutlets, a two-pound loaf of bread, and a

large piece of cheese, and washed down the whole with two bottles of wine. Coffee after that and a glass of brandy, brought the meal to an end about two o'clock. This was the time he had fixed in his own mind.

He placed his hat gingerly on one side, buttoned his buckskin gloves, coughed loudly once or twice in the hearing of the sentinel in the Rue de Rivoli, and finally passed boldly through the wicket.

"Sir," cried the porter, "whom do you want?"

"The Emperor!"

"Have you a letter of appointment?"

"Colonel Fougas has no need of that. Go and ask about me from him who soars over the Place Vendôme; he will tell you that the name of Fougas has always been synonymous with courage and fidelity."

"Do you mean to say that you knew the first Emperor?"

"Yes, my lad, and I have spoken to him, even as I am speaking to you."

"Really? How old are you then?"

"Seventy years, according to the clock of time; twenty-four as inscribed on the pages of history."

The porter lifted his eyes to heaven, and murmured—
"Another one! It is the fourth this week!"

He made a sign to a little man dressed in black, who was smoking his pipe in the courtyard of the Tuileries; then he said to Fougas, laying his hand on his arm—"My good friend, do you wish to see the Emperor?"

"Have I not already told you so, familiar individual that you are?"

"Very well, you shall see him this very day. That gentleman yonder with his pipe, is the master of ceremonies, he will conduct you. But the Emperor is not at the palace, he is in the country. It's all the same to you, isn't it, whether you see him in the country or here?"

"What the deuce does it signify?"

"And all the less as you will not have to walk; they have already called a carriage for you. Come, get in, my dear sir, and be reasonable."

Two minutes later, Fougas, accompanied by a detective, was being conveyed towards the police office. His business was soon settled. The commissary who received him was the same who had spoken to him the evening before at the Opera. A doctor was called, who gave the most unhesitating verdict of monomania that ever sent a man to Charenton. Everything was done most politely and quietly, not a word passed that could put the colonel on his guard, and warn him of the fate which awaited him. He only thought the ceremony tedious and somewhat peculiar, and turned over in his mind some pithy sentences on the subject, with which he intended to favour the Emperor.

At last they allowed him to resume his journey; the cab was still there. The master of the ceremonies re-lit his pipe, said a word to the driver, and seated himself on the colonel's left. The carriage went off at a good round trot, reached the boulevards, and took the direction of the Bastille. They were approaching the Porte St. Martin, and Fougas, with his head out of window, was still preparing his oration, when a carriage, drawn by two splendid roans, passed, so to speak, under his very nose. A big man, with a grey moustache, turned his head, and called out "Fougas!"

Robinson Crusoe, when he discovered the foot-prints of a man on his island, was not more astounded or delighted than Fougas, when he heard this exclamation. To open the door, jump out on the pavement, rush to the carriage, which by this time had stopped, and throw himself into the arms of the big man with the grey moustache, was the work of a moment. The carriage had been gone some time, when the agent of police, running at full speed, and followed by the

cab at a steady trot, tore along the Boulevards, asking every policeman on the road if they had seen a madman pass that way.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONTAINING A MEMORABLE INTERVIEW BETWEEN COLONEL FOGAS
AND THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.

WHEN Fogas threw himself into the arms of the big man with the grey moustache, he was under the impression that he was embracing Masséna. He ingenuously told him so, and the owner of the carriage burst out laughing. "Alas! my poor old fellow," said he, "it is many years since we put the 'Child of Victory' under ground. Look me well in the face. I am Leblanc, of the Russian campaign."

"Is it possible? You—little Leblanc?"

"Lieutenant of the 3rd battery of artillery, who shared with you a thousand dangers, and that famous dish of roast horse, which you salted with your tears."

"What, it is really you? You, who cut me out a pair of boots from the hide of poor Zephyr—not to speak of the number of times you saved my life. Oh, brave and faithful friend, let me embrace you once more! I do recognise you now, though I must admit you are considerably altered."

"Faith, I have not been preserved in a glass jar with spirits of wine—I have lived my life."

"Ah, I see you know my history."

"I heard it spoken of yesterday evening, at the house of the Minister of Public Instruction. The clever man who set you on your legs again was there himself. I even went so

far as to write to you on my return home, offering you a corner and a crust, and my letter must be on the road to Fontainebleau."

"Thanks, you are a true friend! I say, old fellow, what great events have taken place since Beresina! Do you know all the misfortunes that have happened?"

"I saw them all, which is still worse. I was given the command of a squadron after Waterloo. The Bourbons shelved me on half pay; my friends succeeded in getting me on active service in 1822, but somehow I was always unlucky, and have gone the round of all the garrisons, Lille, Grenoble and Strasburg, without ever getting on. I only got my second epaulet in 1830; after that I went to Africa. I was named general of brigade, at Islay; I came back, and was sent from pillar to post till 1848. We had that year a fine campaign, in the very midst of Paris. My heart bleeds still whenever I think of it, and you are lucky, by Jove! not to have witnessed it. I received three balls in the body, and came out general of division. Indeed, I have no right to complain; the Italian campaign brought me good luck. Here am I a Marshal of France, with appointments of a hundred thousand francs, and Duke of Solferino to boot. Yes! the Emperor has given me a handle to my name! The fact is Leblanc by itself was a little too short."

"By Jupiter!" cried Fongus, "this is only right and proper. I take my oath, Leblanc, I am not the least jealous of your good luck. It is not often a soldier rejoices in his comrade's advancement, but really, from the bottom of my heart, I say I am glad! You deserve every honour, and the blind goddess must have seen your talents and your goodness of heart through the bandage which covers her eyes."

"Thanks! but let us talk of yourself; where were you going when I met you?"

"To see the Emperor."

"So was I; but where the deuce did you expect to find him?"

"I don't know. I was being driven there."

"But he is at the Tuileries."

"No!"

"Yes, he is. There is some mystery here; tell me the whole story."

Fongas needed no pressing, and the Marshal understood in a moment from what kind of danger he had rescued his friend.

"The porter made a mistake," said he, calmly. "The Emperor is at the palace, and as we are on the spot, you had better come in with me. Perhaps I may be able to present you, when my audience is over."

"By all that's blue, Leblanc, my heart beats at the thought that I shall see this young man! Is he a good fellow? Can you depend upon him? Is he at all like the other?"

"You shall see for yourself. Wait here for me."

The friendship of these two men dated from the winter of 1812. During the rout of the French army, chance had brought together the lieutenant of artillery and the colonel of the 23rd. One was eighteen years of age, the other not quite twenty-four. The difference of rank was easily lost sight of in their common danger; all men are equals before hunger, cold and fatigue. One morning Leblanc, with ten of his men, snatched Fongas from the hands of the Cossacks; then Fongas killed half-a-dozen stragglers who sought to steal Leblanc's cloak. A week after, Leblanc dragged his comrade out of an old shed, to which the peasants had set fire, and in his turn, Fongas fished his friend out of the Beresina. The catalogue of their mutual services is too long for me to give it in its entirety. Amongst other things, the colonel spent three weeks by the artilleryman's bedside, at

Königsberg, where he was seized with fever, following on frost bite; without doubt this kind nursing saved his life. This reciprocity of devotion had created so strong an attachment between them, that even a separation of forty-six years had failed to lessen it.

Fongas, left by himself in a grand saloon, had flown back in memory to the good old times, when a groom of the chambers came to tell him to take off his gloves and follow him into the Emperor's study. Veneration for the powers that he is so ingrained in my nature that it will not allow me to bring forward on the scene any august personages. But the correspondence of Fongas is a matter of contemporary history, and here is a letter which he wrote to Clementina on returning to his hotel.

“Paris, What do I say?—Paradise,
“21st August, 1859.

“My Angel,

“I am mad with joy, gratitude, and admiration—I have seen him! I have spoken to him; he gave me his hand and bade me be seated. He is a great prince, he will be master of the world. He has given me the St. Helena medal and the officer's cross. Little Leblanc, an old friend with a noble heart, took me there. He is now a Marshal of France, and a Duke under the new Empire.

“As to promotion, I must not think of it as yet; as a prisoner of war in Prussia, located in a triple coffin, I can only take up my old rank—this is military law. But before three months are out I shall be named general of brigade to a certainty; he was good enough to promise me this himself. What a man!—a god upon earth! Gives himself no more airs than the hero of Wagram and Moscow, and like him is the father of the army! He wanted to give me money out of his privy purse to defray the cost of my new equipments.

I replied, 'No, sire, I have a debt to receive at Dantzic ; if they pay me I shall be rich ; if they repudiate the debt my pay will suffice.'

"Thereupon—O, goodness of Princes, thou art then not only a vain word!—smiling to himself, as he twisted his moustache, he said—'You remained in Prussia from 1813 to 1859?'

" 'Yes, sire.'

" 'A prisoner of war under exceptional conditions?'

" 'Yes, sire.'

" 'The treaties of 1814 and 1815 stipulated for the restoration of prisoners?'

" 'Yes, sire.'

" 'They must have been violated in your case?'

" 'Yes, sire.'

" 'Well, then, Prussia owes you an indemnity, and I shall demand it through the diplomatic channel.'

" 'Yes, sire. What kindness!'

" 'This idea would never have entered my head to get back money from Prussia, that Prussia which was so greedy for our treasures in 1814 and 1815! Long live the Emperor!

" 'My beloved Clementina, may our glorious and magnanimous Sovereign live for ever! Long live the Empress and the Prince Imperial! I have seen them both! The Emperor presented me to his family! The Prince is a fine little soldier! He condescended to play the drum on my new hat. I shed tears over his amiability. Her Majesty the Empress, with an angelic smile, told me she had heard of my misfortunes.

" 'Oh, madam,' I replied, 'they are repaid a hundred-fold by such a moment as this.'

" 'You must come and dance at the Tuileries next winter.'

" 'Alas, madam! I have only danced as yet to the roar

of the cannon ; but no effort would be too great for me in order to please you. I will study the art of Vestris.'

" 'I easily learnt to dance a quadrille,' remarked Leblanc.

"The Emperor deigned to say he was glad to recover an officer like myself who had been through, only yesterday as it were, the finest campaigns of this century, and who preserved the traditions of the great war. This praise emboldened me. I ventured to remind him of the famous principle of the good old times, always to sign treaties of peace in the capitals.

" 'Take care,' exclaimed he ; 'it was by virtue of this principle that the allied armies twice entered Paris to sign peace there.'

" 'They shall never come any more,' cried I, 'unless they traraple upon my body !' I pointed out the objections to a too great familiarity with England. I declared my wish soon to begin a conquest of the world ; first of our own frontiers, then the natural frontier of Europe—for Europe is the suburb of France, and we cannot annex her too quickly !

"The Emperor shook his head, as if he disagreed with me. Can he be entertaining pacific notions ? No ! I won't harbour such a thought for a moment, it would be the death of me !

"He asked me what I thought of the changes I had found in Paris. I replied, with all the sincerity of a proud spirit—'Sire, this new city of Paris is the masterpiece of a great reign ; but I trust your ediles are not going to rest upon their oars.'

" 'What is there still wanting, then, according to your idea ?'

" 'Above all, to straighten the course of the Seine, whose winding curves are quite distressing—a straight line is the shortest road from one point to another, in rivers as in roads. In the second place, to level the ground, and do

away with all accidents of soil which seem to say to the administration, thou art less powerful than Nature. Having accomplished this preparatory work, I would mark out a circle of seven miles in diameter, whose circumference, represented by a handsome railing, should form the boundary of Paris. In the centre I would construct a palace for your majesty and the princes of the imperial family, a vast and imposing edifice that should include all branches of the public service among its dependencies—staff-offices, tribunals, museums, ministerial offices, archbishop's palace, head police office, institute, embassies, prisons, bank of France, lycæums, theatres, office of the *Moniteur*, imperial printing-establishment, Gobelins and Sèvres manufactures, and commissariat.

“This palace, which should be circular in form, and built in a magnificent style of architecture, should form a centre to twelve boulevards a hundred and twenty yards wide, ending in twelve railways, and called after the marshals of France. Each boulevard should have on either side a uniform row of houses four storeys high, with an iron railing in front and little gardens nine feet deep, laid out in regular designs, and all of them planted with the same kind of flowers. A hundred streets, sixty yards wide, should connect the boulevards, and be intersected, in their turn, by streets of thirty-five yards, all uniformly built, according to government plans, with iron railings, gardens and regulation flowers. The proprietors should be forbidden to allow any trade to be carried on, for the sight of shops lowers the mind and degrades the soul, shopkeepers should be permitted to establish themselves in the suburbs, subject to certain laws. The ground floor of all these houses should be occupied as stables and kitchens; the first floor be rented by people with an income of a hundred thousand francs; while the second storey is adapted for those of ninety thousand; the third storey for incomes of from sixty to ninety thousand;

the fourth, fifty to sixty thousand. None with a yearly income of less than fifty thousand francs should be allowed to live in Paris. The workmen should live half a dozen miles without the boundary, in artisan fortresses. We would exempt them from taxes, so as to be popular amongst them, and we would surround them with cannon, that they might fear us. That is my conception of Paris !’

“The Emperor listened patiently, while he twirled his moustache. ‘Your plan,’ said he, ‘would cost a great deal.’

“‘Not much more than the one that has been adopted,’ replied I.

“At these words a genial hilarity, the cause of which I felt quite at a loss to understand, lighted up his thoughtful countenance. ‘Don’t you think,’ asked he, ‘that your project would be the ruin of many ?’

“‘What matter,’ cried I, ‘since it would only ruin the rich ?’

“At this he laughed all the more, and took leave of me, saying—‘Colonel Fougas, you must remain a colonel until we can make you a general.’

“A second time he permitted me to shake hands with him. I bowed my adieux to my friend Leblanc, who had invited me to dine with him in the evening, and I went back to the hotel, to pour out my joy into thy sympathising bosom. Clementina, only trust me, you will be happy, and I shall be great! To-morrow morning I leave for Dantzic. Gold is a chimera, but you must be rich. A sweet kiss on thy pure forehead !

“VICTOR FOUGAS.”

The subscribers of the *Patrie*, who file their papers, are requested to refer to the issue of 23rd August, 1859. They will find amongst the paragraphs, the two following which I have taken the liberty of transcribing.

"His Excellency Field Marshal the Duke of Solferino had the honour to present, yesterday, to his Majesty the Emperor, a hero of the first empire, Colonel Fougas, whom an almost miraculous event (already mentioned in a report of the Academy of Sciences) has just restored to his country."

That is the first paragraph, now for the second.

"A madman (the fourth this week, and one of the most dangerous of the kind) presented himself yesterday at the wicket of l'Echelle. Attired in a grotesque costume, his eye glaring, his hat cocked on one side of his head, using the most familiar tone in addressing persons of the highest respectability with unheard of rudeness, he tried to force his way through, and intrude himself, goodness knows with what intention, into the presence of the Emperor. In the midst of his incoherent harangue, the words 'bravery, Place Vendôme, fidelity, clock of time and tablets of history,' might be distinguished. Stopped by a police agent, and brought before a commissary of the Tuileries section, he was recognised as the same individual who, the evening before at the Opera, had interrupted with the most indecorous exclamations, the representation of 'Charles VI.' After the customary proceedings, he was despatched to the hospital at Charenton. But upon nearing the Porte St. Martin, taking advantage of a block of carriages, and exerting the herculean strength he possesses, he extricated himself from the hands of the keeper, threw him to the ground, struck him, bounded on to the boulevard, and was lost in the crowd. The most active search was immediately instituted, and we understand from an authentic source that the authorities are already on the track of the fugitive."

CHAPTER XVII.

HERR MEISER, A RICH PROPRIETOR AT DANTZIC, RECEIVES AN
UNWELCOME VISITOR.

THE wisdom of nations asserts that no one profits by ill-gotten gain. I maintain, however, that the robbers profit thereby considerably more than the robbed, and the handsome fortune amassed by Nicholas Meiser is a case in point.

The nephew of the celebrated physiologist, after having brewed a large quantity of beer, with very little hops, and unjustly reaped the harvest of Fougas's inheritance, had amassed in business a fortune of from eight to ten millions of francs. By what business? That is what I never was told, all I know is that he considered every kind of business fair which brought in a good return for his money. Lending small sums of money at high interest, laying in large stores of wheat to supply the dearth which he had himself created, selling up unfortunate creditors, chartering two or three ships for trading in black flesh on the coast of Africa, those were the kind of speculations which the good man in no way despised. He never boasted of them, because he was a modest man, but he certainly never blushed for them either, having allowed his conscience to expand in proportion to his capital. Otherwise he was a man of honour according to the commercial acceptance of the term; and was capable of butchering the whole human race, rather than his signature should be protested. The banks of Dantzic, Berlin, Vienna,

and Paris thought highly of him, for he had large deposits at them all.

He was big, stout and florid, and lived in clover; his wife had too long a nose, and was too bony, but she loved him sincerely, and made him all kinds of good dishes. A perfect sympathy of feeling united this couple. They conversed together with the utmost candour, and naturally made no secret of their evil thoughts; every year in the autumn, when term time arrived, they turned five or six families of poor artisans into the street, because they were unable to pay their rent, but that did not prevent their eating a good dinner afterwards, and the evening kiss given and received was none the less sweet.

The husband was sixty-six, the wife sixty-four, and their appearance was such as to inspire good-will and command respect. They only wanted children and grandchildren to complete their likeness to the patriarchs. Providence had kindly bestowed upon them a son—their only child, and indeed they had not desired more—they would have considered it an act of treason against fortune, if they had been obliged to divide their wealth among several children. Unhappily this only son, heir presumptive to so many millions, died at the university of Heidelberg of a surfeit of sausage. At twenty he had gone to that Walhalla of Teutonic students, where they devour an unlimited amount of sausage while quaffing inexhaustible supplies of beer, and sing songs of 800,000 verses, while slashing off the tips of each other's noses. Inexorable death snatched him from his parents, when they had reached an age which precluded any chance of a successor. The old misers piously collected his wardrobe, and sold it, during which melancholy operation (for there was a good deal of new linen missing) Herr Meiser said to his wife—"My heart bleeds at the bare idea of our houses and our money, our outward and our hoarded wealth

passing away at our death to utter strangers. Parents ought always to have a second son to fall back upon in the style of our supplementary judge in the chamber of commerce."

But time, which is all powerful in Germany, as well as in other countries, soon showed them there is a balm for every loss excepting the loss of money. Five years after, Frau Meiser said to her husband, with a tender and philosophical smile—"Who can penetrate the wisdom of providence?—our son might have brought us to ruin. Just look at Theobald Scheffler, his old comrade, he wasted twenty thousand francs upon a dancer in Paris. Even we ourselves spent more than two thousand thalers every year on the young scamp; his death is a great saving, and consequently a good thing.'

While Fongus's three coffins were still in the house, the good woman used to laugh at her husband's want of appetite and sleepless nights. "What are you thinking of," said she, "you have done nothing but kick me all night." Let us throw this wretched Frenchman into the fire; he shall no longer disturb the peace of a quiet household. We can sell the leaden coffin, it will fetch at least fifty thalers. The white silk will make me a dress lining, and the wool used for the wadding can be converted into a good mattress."

But a remnant of superstition prevented Meiser from following his wife's advice; he took his own way of getting rid of the colonel by selling him.

The house inhabited by this couple was the handsomest and best built in the street of the Public Well, in the aristocratic part of the town. Strong gratings of wrought iron ornamented all the windows, and the door was plated with iron, like a knight of the olden times. By means of a system of little mirrors, ingeniously reflecting each other, the Meisers could see every one who approached the house before he knocked. A maid servant, who was a regular horse

in the way of work, and a perfect camel for sobriety, lived under this roof favoured by the gods. The old man-servant went home at night, which was to his own interest, as he might otherwise have yielded to the temptation of wringing the venerable old necks of his employers. A few books on business and theology composed the library of these old people. They would not have a garden at the back of the house, because they thought the trees might be a shelter for thieves. At eight o'clock every night, they locked and bolted their door, and never went out at all, unless absolutely obliged, for fear of meeting dangerous people.

But, on the 29th of April, 1859, at eleven in the morning, Nicholas Meiser was a long way from his beloved home, a very long way for him, this honest Dantzic citizen ! He was slowly pacing, with heavy step, the promenade at Berlin known as, "Unter den Linden." What powerful motives had induced this red-faced old bird to leave his snug nest ? The same which led Alexander to Babylon, Scipio to Carthage, Godfrey de Bouillon to Jerusalem, and Napoleon to Moscow—Ambition !

Meiser did not expect to have the keys of the city presented to him on a red velvet cushion, but he knew a nobleman, a chief clerk, and a waiting-maid who were endeavouring to procure him a patent of nobility. To be able to call himself Von Meiser, instead of plain Meiser, what a delightful vision ! The old man possessed that mixture of servility and pride which places a lacquey at such an immeasurable distance from other men. Full of respect for power and admiration of grandeur, he pronounced the name of king, prince, and even baron, with a tone of emphasis and unction. He rolled the sweet syllables of nobility under his tongue, and the simple word lord filled his mouth with delectable water. These kind of temperaments are not rare in Germany, indeed, they may even be found elsewhere. If they

were to be transported into a country where all men are equals, the nostalgia of servitude would kill them.

The claims brought forward in favour of Nicholas Meiser's pretensions to a title were not of the kind which make the scale immediately kick the beam, but of those which gradually make it incline little by little. He was the nephew of a celebrated professor, a ratepayer and a householder, a man of orthodox views, subscriber to the *Neue Kreuz Zeitung*, full of contempt for the Opposition, author of a toast against democracy, a former town councillor, a judge in the chamber of commerce, once a corporal in the landwehr, and a declared enemy of Poland, and of every nation unable to assert its own rights. The most brilliant action of his life transpired ten years before, when he denounced, by an anonymous letter, a member of the Parliament of Frankfort, who had taken refuge in Dantzic.

At the time Meiser was passing under the linden trees, his little transaction was progressing satisfactorily ; he had just received that sweet assurance from his very patrons themselves. So he set off with a light step to the station of the North Eastern Railway, without any other luggage than a revolver in his pocket. His black leather trunk had been sent on before to await his arrival at the booking-office. On his way, he cast a rapid glance at the contents of the shop windows. Hullo ! Suddenly he stops before a stationer's and rubs his eyes—a sovereign remedy, they say, for dimness of sight. Between the portraits of Madame Sand and M. Mérimée, the two greatest writers in France, he perceived, divined, not to say recognised, a well-known face.

"Surely," said he, "I have seen that man before, but in a less flourishing condition. Can our old quondam lodger have come to life again ? Impossible ! I burnt my uncle's directions, and, thanks to me, the secret of resuscitating people is lost. Nevertheless, there is a striking likeness ! Was

this portrait taken in 1813, when Colonel Fougas was living? No, for photography had not been invented at that time. But perhaps this photograph was taken from a picture. Here are Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette taken in the same way, which does not prove that Robespierre resuscitated them. All the same, it is an unlucky omen."

With a view to make some inquiry, he made a step towards the shop door, but was held back by a certain feeling of embarrassment. The question might create surprise, and raise conjecture or remark as to his motives. Forward! And so he continued his walk, stepping out, and trying to reassure himself. "Bah! it is an hallucination," said he, "the effect of a predominant idea; besides which, the man is dressed in the fashion of 1813, which settles it."

He arrived at the railway station, registered his luggage, and threw himself full length on the cushions of a first-class carriage. He smoked his china pipe, his two neighbours slept, and he soon followed their example and snored. The snore of this portly man had a sinister sound about it, like a lugubrious bassoon. What vision did he see during this hour of slumber? No stranger ever know, for he kept his dreams, like his other property, all to himself. But half way between two stations, while the train was going at full speed, he distinctly felt two hands energetically seize him by the feet. A sensation, only too well known, alas! and which brought back to him the most unhappy reminiscence of his life. He opened his eyes in terror, and saw the original of the photograph in the costume of the photograph!

His hair stood on end, his eyes opened as round as balls, and with a wild shriek he threw himself headlong between the seats amidst his fellow travellers' legs. A few hard kicks soon brought him to his senses; he got up as he best could, and looked about him. No one was there but the original inmates of the carriage, who were mechanically dis-

charging the remainder of their kicks into vacancy, and rubbing their eyes assiduously. He roused them completely at last with eager interrogations concerning his recent visitor, but these gentlemen declared they had seen no one.

Meiser's reflections took a sombre hue ; he realised that his visions began to assume a terrible amount of consistency. This idea prevented his going to sleep again. "If this goes on any longer," said he, "the colonel's ghost will end by breaking my nose, or giving me a pair of black eyes !"

A little later, remembering he had made a very light breakfast, he thought that the nightmare might possibly be the result of undue abstinence. At the next stoppage of five minutes he got out, and ordered a basin of soup. They gave him some very hot vermicelli, and he blew into his bowl like a dolphin in the Bosphorus.

A man passed by without touching, speaking to, or even seeing him, and yet the bowl fell from the hands of the rich Nicholas Meiser, and the vermicelli spread itself over his shirt and waistcoat, where it formed an elegant trollys work, in the style of the architecture of the Porte St. Martin. Some yellowish threads detached from the mass hung like stalactites from the buttons of his great coat. The vermicelli remained on the surface, but the soup penetrated much further. It was as hot as you please ; an egg left in it ten minutes would have been hard boiled. Fatal soup, which found its way not only into his pockets, but into the innermost recesses of the man himself. The bell rang, the waiter claimed sixpence for the soup, and Meiser got into the carriage again, preceded by a breastplate of vermicelli, and followed by a little stream of broth, which flowed down the undulations of his calves. And all this because he had seen, or fancied he saw, the terrible apparition of Colonel Fougas eating sandwiches !

Oh, how weary the journey seemed to him ; he longed to

find himself at home again with his wife Catherine, and the servant Berbel, and all the doors securely fastened ! His fellow travellers nearly died with laughing. Ditto the people in the left compartment ; also those to the right. While he was pulling off the vermicelli the little greasy spots of broth hardened from contact with the air, and seemed to laugh silently. What hard lines that a millionaire should be affording so much amusement to a parcel of people without a penny ! He did not quit the carriage again till they reached Dantzic, and never even put his nose out of window, but consoled himself with his china pipe on which Leda was caressing a swan, and was not laughing.

Sad, sad journey ! However he arrived at last ; it was eight o'clock in the evening. The old servant was in waiting with a porter's knot to carry his master's luggage. No more alarming faces ! No more mocking laughter ! The affair of the broth too had sunk into oblivion. Arrived in the waiting-room, Meiser had already seized the handle of a black leather trunk, when he saw at the opposite end the apparition of Fougas pulling it the other way, and seemingly determined to dispute the possession of it with him. Herr Meiser buckled to, tugged at the trunk harder than ever, and even put his hand in his left pocket, where he had thrust his revolver. But fascinated by the glittering gaze of the colonel, his legs gave way under him ; he fell, and imagined he saw Fougas, and the black trunk roll one on the top of the other. When he recovered his senses, his old servant was rubbing his hands, the box had been placed on a truck, and the colonel had disappeared. The servant declared he had seen no one, and that he had received the trunk himself from the hands of the porter.

Twenty minutes later, the millionaire was in his own house, and was pressing his face joyously against the thin and bony cheeks of his wife. He did not dare tell her of his

visions, for Frau Meiser was a strong-minded woman in her way. But she began to speak of Fougas.

"I have a regular history to relate," said she. "Would you believe it, the Berlin police have written to ask if our uncle ever bequeathed us a mummy? Also at what period, how long we kept it, and what we have done with it? I told the truth, adding that Colonel Fougas was in such bad condition, and so eaten by moths, that we sold him as an old rag. What have the police to do with our affairs?" Meiser heaved a deep sigh.

"Let us talk about money matters," continued the lady. "The governor of the bank came to see me; the million that you want to-morrow is ready, and will be paid upon your signature. It appears they have had great difficulty in collecting such a large sum in specie; if you had only been willing to take paper on Vienna or Paris, they would have been better pleased! But, at any rate, they have done as you wished; there is no news, excepting that Schmidt, the merchant, has committed suicide. He had a bill due for ten thousand thalers, and not even half that sum in his cash-box; so he came to me for money, and I offered him ten thousand thalers, at twenty-five per cent., payable in ninety days, with a first mortgage on his premises. The fool preferred to hang himself in his shop. No accounting for taste!"

"Did he hang himself very high?"

"I know nothing about it. Why?"

"Because one might buy the piece of rope cheap, and we are likely to want it, my poor Catherine! This Colonel Fougas gives me a good deal of worry."

"What, more of your stupid fancies? Come to supper, my dear."

"Very well! let us go."

This angular Baucis led her Philemon into a large, handsome dining-room, where Berbol had served a repast worthy

of the gods. Soup with balls of spiced bread, little fish-balls with black butter, balls of mutton with forcemeat, balls of game, sauer kraut and bacon garnished with fried potatoes, roast hare with currant jelly, a pile of cray fish, salmon from the Vistula, jellies, fruit tarts, and so forth. Six bottles of Rhine wine, of the best vintages, were awaiting, in their silver capsules, the greeting of the master. But the lord of the feast was neither hungry nor thirsty. He barely tasted the dishes, and just touched the glass with his lips in anxious expectation of an event which very soon came to pass. A loud knock all at once reverberated through the house.

Nicholas Meiser gave a start; his wife tried to reassure him. "It is nothing," said she. "The governor of the bank told me he should come and speak to you. He offered to give us a premium if we would take bank notes instead of silver."

"It is no question of money," exclaimed the old man. "It is the devil himself who is coming to see us."

At the same moment, the maid servant rushed into the room screaming—"Sir—madam—it is the Frenchman, come out of the three coffins, oh, Blessed Virgin!"

Fougas bowed, and said—"Good people, don't disturb yourselves, I beg. There is a little matter to be settled between us which I will explain to you in two words. You are in a hurry—so am I. You have not yet supped—neither have I."

"Frau Meiser, stiffer and thinner than a statue of the thirteenth century, opened her large, toothless mouth. She was paralysed with fear.

The man, who was better prepared for the phantom's visit, cocked his revolver under the table, and took aim at the colonel, crying—"Vade retro Satanus!"

The exorcism and the pistol both missed fire simultaneously. Still Meiser did not lose heart, but fired, one after another, the six chambers of his revolver at the demon,

who stood watching his movements. None of them, however, went off.

"What the deuce of a game are you at?" said Colonel Fougas, seating himself astride a chair. "I never before heard of a Christian being received in this fashion."

Meiser threw down his revolver, and dragged himself like an animal up to Fougas's feet. His wife, equally frightened, did the same. They clasped their hands, and the fat man exclaimed—"Spirit, I confess my wretched doings, and am ready to atone for them. I have been guilty towards you; I disobeyed my uncle's instructions. What do you desire of me? What are your commands? A tomb? A handsome monument?—prayers for the repose of your soul? Many prayers?"

"Idiot!" said Fougas, spurning him with his foot. "I am not a spirit, and I want nothing but the money of which you have robbed me."

Meiser still grovelled, but his gaunt wife had already sprung to her feet, and, with her arms akimbo, defied the colonel. "Money!" cried she. "We don't owe you any—Have you any papers? Show us our signature first! Where should we be, I ask you, if we were to give money to every adventurer who presented himself? And if you are not a spirit, by what right have you intruded into our house? Oh, you are a man like any other, are you? You are not a spirit, then? Very well; let me tell you, sir, there are judges at Berlin, nay, even in the provinces, and we will soon see if you can lay hands on our money. Get up, you great gander—he is only a man! And you, Mr. Ghost, clear out, do you hear? Come, leave the house."

The colonel remained immovable as a rock. To the deuce with the woman's tongue!" exclaimed he. "Sit down, old lady, and take your fists out of my eyes, for they are not as soft as they might be. As for you, bloated old fellow, sit

down again, and listen to me. There will be plenty of time to go to law, if we can't come to some understanding in the meanwhile. Law papers stink in my nostrils, and I would rather treat with you amicably."

Herr and Frau Meiser gradually recovered from their fright; like most dishonest people, they were distrustful of law courts. If this colonel should prove a poor wretch whom they could appease with a few thalers, it would be much better, thought they, to avoid a lawsuit.

Fougas put the case to them with military frankness. He proved the evidence of his claim, related how he had established his identity at Fontainebleau, Paris, and Berlin; repeated from memory two or three passages from the will, and ended by declaring that both the Prussian and French governments were ready to unite if necessary in helping him to obtain his rights. "You know very well," added he, seizing Meiser by the button-hole, "that I am not a shuffling old fox of a lawyer. If you were only strong enough to wield a sword we would go upon the ground arm in arm to fight, and I would play you for the sum, first two cuts out of three, as true as you smell of soup."

"Happily, sir," said Meiser, "my age is a protection against such brutality: you would not wish to trample on the corpse of an old man."

"Venerable old scoundrel! but you would have thought nothing of shooting me like a dog, if your pistol had not hung fire."

"It was not loaded, colonel; it was—scarcely loaded at all. But I am an accommodating individual, and we may be able to come some arrangement. I owe you nothing, and besides, there is a clause—however—how much do you want?"

"That is your say, is it?—now for mine."

The old rascal's accomplice softened the tones of her voice;

just imagine, if you can, a saw licking a tree before cutting it down. "Listen, Claus, listen to what Colonel Fongas is going to say. You will soon see how sensible he is. He would never dream of bringing ruin upon poor people like ourselves. Good heavens! No! he would be incapable of that—he has such a noble heart—he is such a disinterested man! A worthy officer of the great Napoleon (peace be to his soul!)"

"That's enough, old lady," said Fongas with an energetic gesture, which nipped this discourse in the bud. "They made out for me at Berlin the sum which is owing to me, capital and interest included."

"Interest!" cried Meiser. "But in what country or latitude has interest ever been paid? In trade, perhaps, but between friends never, oh, never! My good colonel, what would my poor uncle say, looking down upon us from heaven at this moment, if he knew that you claimed the interest of his property?"

"Hold your tongue, Nickel," remonstrated his wife "The colonel has just told you himself that he did not intend to ask for the interest."

"Why in the name of great guns will you not be silent, you two magpies! I am dying with hunger, and I did not bring my nightcap with me, to sleep here. The matter is this, you owe me a good deal, but it is not a round sum, and I hate fractions; I am all for even money, besides which, my wants are moderate. I have enough for my wife and myself; all I need is a provision for my son."

"All right," cried Meiser. "I promise to take charge of the boy and see to his education."

"For the last ten days, ever since I have become again a citizen of the world, there is one word I hear on all sides. At Berlin as in Paris, every one talks of millions: they seem to think of nothing else, and every man's mouth is full of millions. From constantly hearing of them I am longing to

know what they are. So go fetch me a million, and I will give you a receipt in full."

If you wish to form any idea of the heartrending cries which succeeded this speech, go to the zoological gardens at the hour when they feed the birds of prey, and try to snatch the meat from them. Fougas turned a deaf ear, and stuck to his original text. Prayers, arguments, lies, flatteries, evasions, fell unheeded, and slipped off him like water off a duck's back.

At ten o'clock, seeing no prospect of coming to an understanding, he took up his hat. "Good night," said he, "it is not one million that I shall ask for now, but two millions, and the remainder; we will go to law. Now I am off to supper."

He was already on the stairs, when Frau Meiser said to her husband—"Call him back and give him his million."

"Are you mad?"

"No, don't be alarmed."

"Oh, I really could not!"

"Good gracious, what fools men are! Sir! Colonel Fougas! come up again, I beg of you! We consent to everything you ask."

"By Jove!" replied he, returning, "you should have made up your minds before, but come, let us see the money!"

Frau Meiser explained in her most dulcet tones, that poor capitalists like themselves did not keep so large a sum in their cash-box. "But you shall lose nothing by that, my dear sir. To-morrow you shall have the amount in good coin of the realm; my husband is going to give you a cheque for it on the Royal Bank of Dantzic."

The unfortunate Meiser protested, yet signing the cheque all the same, for he had unbounded confidence in Catherine's practical genius. The old woman begged Fougas to sit down at the foot of the table, and dictated to him a

receipt for two millions as an acknowledgment in full. You may be sure she did not leave out a single word of legal formula, and that it was in strict accordance with the Prussian code. The receipt, made out entirely in the colonel's writing, filled three whole pages.

He signed the document with a flourish to his name, and received in exchange Nicholas's signature, which he knew to be valid. "Decidedly," said he to the old man, "you are not such a Jew as they made out at Berlin. Shake hands, old cheat! I only give my hand to honest people as a rule, but on an occasion like this, one may allow oneself a little extra license."

"Do still more, Colonel Fongas," said Frau Meiser, with humility, "share our modest repast!"

"Thanks, old lady, I won't refuse. My supper at the Bell Inn must be quite cold by this time, and your dishes still smoking on the hot-water plates have more than once disturbed the even tenour of my ideas. Besides which, Fongas would have no objection to play a tune on those slender yellow glasses."

The respectable Catherine ordered a place to be laid for the colonel, and told Berbel she might go to bed. The colonel folded in eight Meiser's cheque for a million, placed it carefully midst a roll of bank notes, and put the whole in the pocket book his dear Clementina had sent him.

Eleven o'clock was then striking; at half-past eleven Fongas began to see the world through rose-coloured glasses. He was loud in his praises of the Rhine wine, and thanked the Meisers cordially for their hospitality. At midnight he assured them of his esteem, at a quarter past, he embraced them, and at half-past he sang the praises of John Meiser, his benefactor and his friend. When he learnt that John Meiser had died in that very house, he shed a torrent of tears; at a quarter to one he became confidential, and

spoke of the son whom he hoped to make happy, and of the betrothed who was awaiting him. At one o'clock he tasted some famous port wine which Frau Meiser went herself to fetch from the cellar. Half-past one found him thick of speech and his eyes heavy with drowsiness; he struggled for some time against inebriety and sleep, told them he was going to relate the story of the Russian campaign, murmured the Emperor's name, and finally slid under the table.

"You may believe me or not, as you like," said Frau Meiser to her husband, "it is not a man who has entered this house, but the very old gentleman himself."

"The old gentleman!"

"Otherwise, do you think I should have advised you to give him that million. I heard a voice saying to me 'If you don't give that million to Satan's messenger, you will both die this night;' it was then I called him upstairs again. Ah, if we had to do with a man only, I should have advised you to dispute this claim to your last penny!"

"That's right, and now will you laugh again at my visions?"

"Pardon me, dear Claus, I was mad."

"And I had ended by believing I was mad myself."

"Poor innocent, perhaps you also believed it was really Colonel Fougas?"

"Faith! I did indeed."

"As if it were possible to resuscitate a man! A demon, I tell you, who has taken the form of the colonel on purpose to rob us of our money."

"But what can demons want with money?"

"How do I know? Perhaps they build cathedrals!"

"But how can one recognise a demon in disguise?"

"First by his cloven foot—but then he has boots on—then by his broken ear, which has been mended."

"You don't say so—what for?"

"Why, because the devil has pointed ears, and to make them round he is obliged to have them cut."

Meiser leant under the table, and uttered a cry of alarm. "It really is indeed the devil," said he, "but how has he allowed himself to fall asleep?"

"Did you not notice that in returning from the cellar, I went into my bedroom. I put a drop of holy water into the port wine, charm against charm! and he has succumbed."

"How fortunate! But what shall we do with him now that he is powerless?"

"What did they do with the demons in Scripture? Were they not cast into the sea?"

"The sea is so far off!"

"But, you great baby! the public well is close by."

"And what will be said to-morrow when they find his body?"

"They will find nothing at all, and even this very paper which we have made him sign will be changed to a dry leaf to-morrow."

Ten minutes later Herr and Frau Meiser swung a heavy body over the parapet of the well, and Catherine murmured in a low voice the following incantation—"Demon, child of darkness, be accursed! Demon, child of darkness, depart from us! Demon, child of darkness, return to the lower regions!"

A muffled sound, the noise of a body falling into the water completed the ceremony, and the two accomplices re-entered their house with all the satisfaction of having done a praiseworthy action. Nicholas said to himself—"I never thought she was so superstitious!"

"I never knew he was so simple," said the lawful wife of Claus.

They slept the sleep of the innocent; ah, how much less soft their pillow would have been, had Colonel Fongas gone home with his million all safe.

At ten o'clock in the morning, while they were taking their coffee and buttered rolls, the governor of the bank called and said to them—"I am come to thank you for having accepted a draft on Paris instead of the million in money, and without premium. That young Frenchman you sent us is rather off-hand perhaps, but a lively and good-natured fellow."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COLONEL TRIES TO GET RID OF A MILLION WHICH HE FINDS IN THE WAY.

Fougas left Paris for Berlin the day after his audience with the Emperor. He took three days to perform the journey, as he stayed some time at Nancy. The marshal had given him a letter of introduction to the prefect of La Meurthe, who received him very kindly, and promised him every assistance in his search. Unfortunately, the house where he had loved and lived with Clementina Pichon was no longer in existence. It had been pulled down by order of the municipality in 1807, to make an opening for a new street.

It is true the ediles had not demolished the family with the house ; but a fresh difficulty arose on that score, for the name of Pichon was legion in the town, the suburbs, and the whole department. Amid this multitude of Pichons, Fougas was at a loss whom to embrace. At last, weary of the search, and eager to fly and meet fortune half way, he left this note in the hands of the commissary of police—

"Search the registers and elsewhere for the name of a young girl called Clementina Pichon. In 1813 she was eighteen years of age. and her parents kept a boarding-house

for officers in the army. If she still lives, ascertain her address ; if dead, inquire for her heirs, the happiness of a father depends on this."

On arriving at Berlin, the colonel found his reputation had already preceded him. A letter from the Minister of War had been forwarded to the Prussian Government by the French Legation. Léon Renault, in spite of his grief, had found time to write a few lines to Dr. Hirtz ; the newspapers began to make comments on the case, and the learned societies to bestir themselves. The Prince Regent condescended to interrogate his physician on the subject, for Germany is a curious country, where science creates an interest even in the minds of princes.

Fougas, who had read the letter which Dr. Hirtz had annexed to the will of Dr. Meiser, thought it would be only right for him to go and thank the good man. He paid him a visit and embraced him, calling him the oracle of Epidaurus. The doctor took possession of him, made him send for his luggage from the hotel, and gave him the best room in the house.

Until the 29th of the month the colonel was petted as a friend and exhibited as a phenomenon. Seven photographers disputed the honour of depicting so great a man, the cities of Greece did no more for poor old Homer.

His Royal Highness the Prince Regent desired to see him, and begged Dr. Hirtz to bring him to the palace. Fougas hung back at first, and pretended that a soldier ought not to be on friendly terms with the enemy of his country ; evidently he thought himself still in the year 1813.

The Prince is a distinguished officer, who commanded in person at the famous siege of Rastadt. He enjoyed the piquant conversation of Fougas. The ingenuous simplicity of this young old soldier delighted him. He paid him a great many compliments, and said that the Emperor of the

French was very lucky to possess officers of so much merit around him.

"He has not many of them," replied the colonel. "If there were only four or five hundred of my stamp your Europe would have been bagged long ago." This answer seemed more amusing than threatening, and the strength of the Prussian army was not augmented in consequence.

The Prince informed Fougas that his indemnity had been fixed at two hundred and fifty thousand francs, and that he might claim this sum at the Treasury whenever it suited him to do so.

"Your Highness," replied he, "it is always pleasant to pocket money belonging to an en—— a stranger. But come, I am not a thuriferary of Plutus, only give me back the Rhine and Posen and I will cry quits."

"Do you know what you are saying?" said the Prince, laughing—"the Rhine and Posen!"

"The Rhine belongs to France and Posen to Poland much more strictly than this money to me. But you great people are all alike; you go out of your way to pay your small debts, and make it a point of honour to repudiate the great ones."

The Prince made a grimace, and the countenances of those around him assumed the same displeased expression. It was universally thought that M. Fougas had failed in tact in allowing this crumb of truth to fall into his dish of nonsense.

But a pretty little Viennese baroness, who had assisted at the presentation, was much more struck by the colonel's handsome face than scandalised by his conversation. The Viennese ladies have a great reputation for hospitality, which they take care to merit not only at home, but even in other countries.

The Baroness de Marcomarcus had another reason for making herself agreeable to the colonel. For two or three years past she had been making a collection of celebrated

men—photographically, of course! Her album was filled with the portraits of generals, statesmen, philosophers, and pianists, who had given themselves to her with this inscription underneath: "In respectful homage." There might be found among them several prelates, and even a celebrated cardinal; but as yet a man risen from the dead was wanting. She therefore wrote Fougas a note brimming over with impatience and curiosity, inviting him to sup with her.

Fougas, who had decided to leave the next day for Dantzic, took a large sheet of paper and began to excuse himself politely. He was afraid, this man of tender and chivalrous feeling, that an evening of pleasant converse, spent in the society of one of the prettiest women in Germany, might be a moral infidelity to the memory of Clementina. He racked his brain to find a proper form of apology, and began thus:—"Too indulgent beauty, I—" but the muse refused to inspire him further. He was not in the humour to write; he felt more inclined to sup. His scruples vanished like clouds driven before a north-east wind; he put on his frogged sur-tout, and answered the invitation in person.

It was the first supper he had eaten since his resuscitation, and he gave proof of an excellent appetite, drinking rather too much, though not as deeply as usual. The baroness, astonished at his cleverness, wit, and unflagging spirits, kept him with her as long as possible, and even now, when showing the colonel's picture to her friends, she says—"The French are the only soldiers fit to conquer the world."

The next day he strapped up the black leather trunk that he had bought in Paris, claimed his money at the Treasury, and set out for Dantzic. He slept in the railway carriage, after the supper of the previous night, until a terrible snore awoke him. Looking round for the culprit, and not finding him in his compartment, he opened the door of the adjoining one, and forcibly shook a big man whose body seemed to be

a receptacle for all the barrels of an organ. At one of the stations the colonel drank a bottle of Marsala, and ate two dozen sandwiches, because the supper of the night before had left an internal vacuum.

At Dantzic he rescued his black trunk from the hands of a fat thief who was just going to take possession of it. He was shown to the best hotel in the town, ordered his supper, and then rushed off to find the house of the Meisers. His friends at Berlin had given him sundry information respecting these charming people. He was quite aware that he would have to deal with the richest and stingiest of rogues—this is why he adopted that cavalier tone which may, perhaps, have surprised some of my readers in the preceding chapter.

Unhappily, he softened a little too much when he had his million safely in his pocket. His curiosity to explore the bottom of those long-necked bottles nearly did him an evil turn. His mind must have wavered towards one o'clock in the morning, if we may believe the story he tells about it. He declared that after having said good-night to the excellent couple who had treated him so hospitably he fell into a large deep well, whose sides being very little above the level of the street, ought at least to have had the distinction of a lamp.

"I awoke," says the colonel, "to find myself in the midst of a pool of very cold water which tasted excellent. "After swimming for two or three minutes, vainly seeking some coign of vantage, I seized a thick rope and drow myself up with ease to land, which was only about forty feet above me. You only need a good pair of arms and a knowledge of gymnastics ; it is no special feat. Jumping on the pavement, I found myself confronted with a species of night-watch, who was bawling the hour in the streets, and who insolently asked me what I was doing there. I drubbed him well for

his impertinence, and this little exercise put my blood in circulation, and did me good.

"Before returning to the inn, I stopped under a gas lamp, opened my pocket-book, and saw with delight that my draft for a million was not wet. The leather was thick and the clasp secure, besides which I had wrapped up Herr Meiser's cheque in half a dozen bank notes of a hundred francs, which were greasy as a monk—this had preserved my treasure."

Having realised this fact the colonel went home, retired to bed, and slept soundly. The next day he received the following communication from the police at Nancy:—

"Clementina Pichon, aged eighteen, youngest daughter of Augustus Pichon, hotel-keeper, and of Léonie Francelot, his wife, married in this town, the 11th January, 1814, Louis Antony Langevin, of no profession.

"The name of Langevin is as rare in this department as that of Pichon is common. Excepting M. Victor Langevin, councillor of the prefecture, at Nancy, we know only one other Langevin, Peter, commonly called Pierrot, a miller of the commune of Vergaville, in the canton of Dieuze."

Fougas leapt nearly up to the ceiling, exclaiming—"I have a son!"

Calling up the master of the hotel, he said to him—"Make out my bill, and send my luggage to the railway station. Take my ticket for Nancy; I shall not stop anywhere on the road. Here are two hundred francs, which I give you that you may drink my son's health! He is called Victor, after me! He is a councillor of the prefecture! I would have preferred a soldier, but no matter! First of all, drive me to the bank. I must get the million which belongs to him."

As there is no direct line between Dantzic and Nancy, he was obliged to stop at Berlin. Dr. Hirtz, who saw him as he passed through, informed him that the learned societies of the

town were preparing a sumptuous banquet in his honour. Fougas refused point blank. "It is not," said he, "that I disdain an opportunity of drinking in good company, but Nature will be heard; her voice leads me on. The sweetest intoxication to every well-constituted mind is that of parental love!"

By way of preparing his dear child in some measure for the joy his unexpected return was likely to cause him, he put the draft he had received on Paris for the million into an envelope, addressed to M. Victor Langevin, enclosing also a long letter, which ended thus—

"A father's blessing is of more value than all the gold in the world.
VICTOR FOUGAS."

Clementina's fickleness rather hurt his self-esteem, but he soon got over that. "At least," thought he, "I shall not be obliged to marry an old woman, when there is a young one awaiting me at Fontainebleau. And then—my son has a home and a very presentable name after all. Fougas is much better, but Langevin is not so very bad."

He arrived on the 2nd of September, at six in the evening, in this large and beautiful but somewhat dull town, which is the Versailles of Lorraine. His heart beat with emotion; to give himself strength, he ate a good dinner, and the landlord, whom he questioned during dessert, gave him the most satisfactory information respecting M. Langevin, a man still young, married within the last six years, with one son and one daughter, esteemed in the neighbourhood and in good circumstances. "I was certain of that," said Fougas, who poured himself out a libation of a certain kirsch of the Black Forest, which seemed to him delicious with maccaroons.

That evening, M. Langevin related to his wife that on returning from his club, at ten o'clock, he had been roughly accosted by a drunken man. At first he took him for a

thief, and prepared to defend himself, but the man, after embracing him, took to his heels, and fled. This curious incident was the subject of various conjectures, each more improbable than the other, on the part of the husband and wife, but both being young and lively people, they soon changed the subject of conversation.

The next day Fongas, laden with bonbons, like a miller's ass with flour, presented himself at M. Langevin's door. In order to gain a welcome from his grandchildren, he had taken the pick of Lebègue's celebrated shop. The servant who opened the door asked if he were the gentleman her master expected.

"All right," replied he. "My letter then has arrived?"

"Yes, sir, yesterday morning. Have you any luggage?"

"I left it at the hotel."

"Monsieur will be vexed. Your room is all ready."

"Thanks! thanks! thanks! Here's a bank note for a hundred francs for you, for giving me such good news."

"Oh, sir, there is no necessity!"

"But where is he? I must see him, embrace him, tell him—"

"He is dressing, sir, and madame, too."

"And the children? My dear little grandchildren!"

"If you would like to see them, they are in the dining-room."

"Of course I should like. Open the door, quick!"

Fongas fancied the little boy resembled himself, and was delighted to find him in an artillery uniform, wearing a sabre. He emptied his pockets on the floor, and the children, at the sight of so many good things, clung round his neck. "Oh, philosophers," cried the colonel, "will you dare deny the voice of Nature?"

A pretty little woman (all the young women at Nancy are pretty) ran in, when she heard the joyous exclamations of her offspring.

"My daughter-in-law," cried Fongas, opening his arms,

The mistress of the house prudently stepped back, and with an arch smile, said--"You are mistaken, sir. I am neither yours by law nor nature. I am Madame Langevin."

"How stupid I am," thought the colonel. "I was just going to blurt out before these children all our family secrets. Manners, Fougas! You are in good society, where the ardour of the sweetest sentiments hides itself under the icy mask of indifference."

"Pray, be seated," said Madame Langevin. "I hope you have had a pleasant journey?"

"Yes, madame, excepting that the train seemed to me very slow."

"I did not know that you were in such a hurry to get here."

"Can't you understand that I was burning with impatience to be with you?"

"So much the better. It is a proof that at last you have listened to reason and the persuasions of your family."

"Was it my fault, if my family was so long in speaking?"

"What is of most importance is that you have listened; we will try to prevent your being dull at Nancy."

"How could that be possible, as long as I remain in the midst of you?"

"Thanks; our house shall be your home. Understand that you are to be quite one of the family."

"Both in heart and soul, madame."

"And you will no longer think of Paris?"

"Paris! I altogether despise it."

"I ought to inform you that here it is not the custom to fight duels."

"What, you already know--?"

"We know everything, even to that famous supper with certain ladies."

"How the deuce did you learn all this? But really that time I was not to blame--"

M. Langevin now appeared in his turn, clean shaved and ruddy—a fine type of a sub-prefect in embryo.

"Admirable," thought Fougas, "how well we keep our looks in my family! You would never say that fellow was more than thirty-five, and he must be forty-six if he is a day. By the way he is not at all like me, he favours his mother!"

"My dear," said Madame Langevin to her husband, "here is a naughty boy who promises to be good."

"Welcome, young man," said the councillor, as he shook hands with Fougas.

This greeting seemed cold to our poor hero; he had dreamt of a shower of kisses and tears, and his children contented themselves by shaking hands with him. "My eh—, sir," said he to M. Langevin, "there is still one person wanting to complete our family circle. Certain mutual wrongs, effaced by time, ought not to create an insurmountable barrier between us. May I be allowed to ask the favour of an introduction to your mother?"

M. Langevin and his wife stared with astonishment. "Really, sir," said the husband, "Paris life must have impaired your memory. My poor mother is dead! We lost her three years ago!"

Fougas burst into tears. "I beg your pardon," faltered he. "I did not know—poor lady!"

"I don't understand you—did you know my mother?"

"Ingrate!"

"Queer kind of fellow you are! Surely your parents received a proper announcement?"

"What parents?"

"Your father and mother."

"Pooh! what nonsense is this you are talking! My mother died before yours came into the world."

"Your mother is dead, do you say?"

"Yes, faith, in 1789."

"What do you mean? did not your mother send you here?"

"No, I was led here by my paternal love."

"Paternal love! Then you are not young Jamin who made a fool of himself in Paris, and who has been sent to Nancy to attend the lectures at the School of Forestry?"

The colonel, in a voice worthy of Jupiter Tonans, replied—
"I am Fougas!"

"Well, and then?"

"If nature does not make your heart throb, ungrateful son that you are, then I refer you to your mother's memory."

"By Jove!" said the councillor, "we may carry on this game of cross purposes for ever. Sit down there, if you please, and tell me what your business is—Marie, take the children away."

Fougas needed no pressing, he related the romance of his life, omitting nothing but speaking with extreme delicacy, so as not to hurt the filial feelings of M. Langevin, who listened patiently to the whole, like a man not the least interested in the matter.

"Sir," said the councillor, "at first I took you for a madman, now I remember to have read in the papers some of the incidents of your history, and I perceive you are the victim of a mistake. I am not forty-six years old, but thirty-four. My mother's name was not Clementina Pichon, but Marie Kerval. She was born at Vannes, not Nancy, and in 1813 she was only seven years old. And now I have the honour to wish you good morning!"

"Ah! you are not my son," cried Fougas, in an explosion of anger; "so much the worse for you. It is not every one who can claim a father of the name of Fougas. As to sons of the name of Langevin, you may pick any amount of them out of the gutter! I know of one—true he is not a councillor of the prefecture, who puts on an embroidered coat to go to church—but he is a good honest fellow, and is called

Peter, like me ! Excuse my mentioning it, but when you turn people out of doors, you should at least restore what belongs to them."

"Certainly, don't let me prevent you from picking up the bonbons my children have scattered on the floor !"

"Bonbons indeed ! it is my million that I want."

"What million ?"

"Your brother's million—no, that's not it—the million of him who is not your brother. I mean Clementina's son, my dear and only child, the only scion of my race—Peter Langevin, commonly called Pierrot, a miller at Vergaville."

"I swear to you, sir, that I possess no million either belonging to you or to any other person."

"How dare you deny it, rascal, when I sent it to you myself through the post ?"

"Possibly you may have sent it, but I most certainly have not received it."

"Well then, defend yourself !"

With this he seized M. Langevin by the throat, and in all probability France would that day have lost one of her public officials, if the servant had not entered at that moment with two letters in her hand. Fongas instantly recognised his own handwriting and the Berlin postmark, tore open the letter, and exhibited the cheque on the Bank of France. "There," said he, "is the million that I intended to give you, had you been my son ! Now it is too late for you to retract. Nature calls me to Vergaville. Your servant !"

On the 4th of September, Peter Langevin of Vergaville celebrated the wedding of Cadet Langevin, his second son. The miller's family was numerous, respectable, and fairly well off. First, there was the grandfather, a solid old fellow, who took his four meals like a man, and doctored all his ailments with the wine of Bar or Thiancourt. The grandmother, Catherine, had been pretty in her day, and rather

gay, but now she was stone deaf by way of expiation for having listened to too many lovers in her youth. Peter Langevin, called sometimes Pierrot, sometimes big Peter, after having tried his fortune in America (rather a common habit in that district) had returned to his native village, like a shorn sheep, and heaven knows the stories that were told of his misadventures. The inhabitants of Lorraine delight in quizzing; if you don't understand a joke, take my advice and never go into their neighbourhood. Big Peter, stung to the quick, and vexed at having squandered his patrimony, borrowed money at ten per cent., bought the mill at Vergaville, worked like a cart horse, and soon recouped both principal and interest. Dame Fortune, who owed him some compensation, liberally bestowed upon him free, gratis, for nothing, half a dozen splendid labourers, six big fine boys, one of whom his wife presented him with every year as regularly as a piece of clock-work. Every year after the fête of Vergaville, Claudine had one ready for baptism. Unfortunately she died after the birth of the sixth, from having eaten four large pieces of christening cake while still keeping her bed. Big Peter never married again, he had workmen enough, and he increased his wealth by degrees. But as village jokes are long-lived, the miller's friends often twitted him about that famous million which he did not bring back from America, and big Peter got as angry, and flushed up under his mask of flour as quickly as in the old days.

On the 4th of September, then, as I before mentioned, his second son was married to a bouncing woman from Altroff with fat purple cheeks, which is a style of beauty much affected in that part of the country. The wedding festivities took place at the mill, seeing the bride was an orphan, and that she had only just come out of a convent at Molsheim.

It was announced to Peter Langevin that a gentleman,

wearing the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour, wished to speak to him, and Fongas appeared in all his glory.

"My good gentleman," said the miller, "I am not exactly in the mood to discuss business, as we have just been drinking some white wine before going to church, but at dinner we shall have plenty of red wine, and, if you are disposed to make one of us, don't stand on ceremony. The table is long—we can talk afterwards—you don't refuse?—then it is settled."

"This time," thought Fongas, "I am not mistaken. Surely it is the voice of Nature! I would have preferred a soldier, but this honest, out-spoken agriculturist touches my heart. I shall not be his debtor in the way of any satisfaction to my pride, but no matter—I possess his friendship!"

Dinner was served, and the table was more loaded with viands than Gargantua's stomach. Big Peter, as proud of his large family as of his little fortune, went through the enumeration of his sons to the colonel, who felt highly gratified to learn that he had six well-grown grandchildren.

They had placed Fongas on the right of a little bent old woman, whom they presented to him as the grandmother of these young fellows! Good heavens! how changed Clementina appeared to him. Excepting her eyes, which retained all their fire, there remained no trace of her former beauty. "This is what I should have been to-day," thought Fongas, "if that good Dr. Meiser had not dried me up."

He smiled cunningly as he looked at grandfather Langevin, the putative head of this large family. "Poor old man," murmured Fongas, "you don't know how much you owe me."

Dinner is a noisy affair at a village wedding. This is an abuse which I hope civilisation will never reform. Under cover of the tumult, the colonel attempted a conversation with his neighbour. "Clementina," said he.

She raised her eyes, and even her nose, and responded—
“Yes, sir.”

“Then my heart has not deceived me ; you are indeed my Clementina ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Did you recognise me, good and excellent woman ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“But how were you able to conceal your emotion ? women are strong indeed ! I fall as if from the skies in the midst of your peaceful existence, and you are able to see me without moving an eyelid.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Have you forgiven me the apparent crime for which really fate alone was to blame ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Thanks, oh thanks ! What a charming family you have around you ! That good Peter, who received me with open arms, is my son, is he not ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Rejoice, then ; he will be rich. Happiness he already possesses. I bring him a fortune—a whole million will be his portion. What delight, O Clementina ! there will be in this simple assemblage when I lift up my voice and say to my son, ‘Here, this million is thine.’ Has that moment arrived ? shall I speak ? shall I tell everything ?”

“Yes, sir.”

Upon this, Fougas rose and begged for silence. Every one thought he was going to sing a song, and they all held their tongues.

“Peter Langevin,” said he, with emphasis, “I have come back from another world, and I bring you a million.”

Though big Peter did not get into a positive rage, he could not help turning red at what he considered a sorry jest of doubtful taste. But when Fougas announced that he had

been in love with the grandmother in her youth, the old grandfather Langevin did not hesitate to throw a bottle at his head. The colonel's son, his splendid grandsons, and even the bride herself, sprang to their feet in anger, and a fierce battle ensued.

For the first time in his life, Fougas was not the strongest of the party ; he was afraid of blinding some members of his family, and this paternal sentiment robbed him of half his strength. But having found out by chance in the *melée* that Clementina was called Catherine, and that Peter Langevin was born in 1810, he resumed his energy, bunged up three eyes, broke an arm, spoilt two noses, knocked out at least four dozen teeth, and regained his carriage with all the honours of war.

"Confound all children !" muttered he, driving post-haste to the Avricourt station, "if I really have a son, let him find me out."

CHAPTER XIX.

HE ASKS FOR AND GIVES AWAY THE HAND OF CLEMENTINA.

On the 5th of September, ten o'clock in the morning found Léon Renault, thin, wretched, and hardly recognisable, at the feet of Clementina Sambuco in her aunt's drawing-room. There were flowers on the mantelpiece, flowers in all the stands. Two saucy sunbeams had found their way through the open windows, and a thousand little silvery motes were playing in the sunlight, disporting themselves, and crossing each other like the ideas in a volume of M. Alfred Houssayo's.

In the garden the apples were falling, the peaches were ripe, wasps were scooping deep holes in the duchess pears,

the bignonias and clematis were in flower, and last, but not least, a magnificent basket of heliotropo was in full bloom under the left-hand window. The sun was gilding the grapes on the trellis with golden brown, and the yucca on the lawn, tossed by the wind like a Chinese hat, was noiselessly shaking its silvery bells. But Léon looked paler and more faded than the boughs of the lilac, more beaten down than the leaves of the old cherry tree, his heart, devoid of joy and hope, was like a gooseberry bush that has neither foliage nor fruit.

After having expatriated himself from his native land, lived for three years under inhospitable skies, spent so many days at the bottom of the mines, so many nights stretched on a porcelain stove in company more numerous than pleasant, of vermin and monjiks, after all this, to find himself set aside for a colonel valued at twenty-five louis, whom he had resuscitated himself by steeping him in water !

Every man has gone through some sort of deception, but surely no one had ever experienced so unforeseen and remarkable a misfortune. Léon was well aware that this world is not a valley of chocolate cream or potage *à la reine* ; he was acquainted with the roll of illustrious sufferers, beginning with Abel, done to death in the terrestrial paradise, and ending with the massacre of Rubens in the gallery of the Louvre in Paris. But history, which seldom instructs us, never consoles us ; the poor engineer vainly told himself that thousands of other men had been supplanted on the very eve of their marriage, and hundreds of thousands on the day after ; sorrow got the better of reason, and three or four stray hairs began to turn grey on his temples.

"Clementina," murmured he, "I am the most wretched man in creation. In refusing me the hand you have already promised, you condemn me to undergo an agony a hundred times worse than death. Alas ! what is to become of me

without you? I must end by living alone, for I love you too much ever to marry another woman. For four years past all my affection, all my thoughts have centred in you; I have got into the way of thinking of all other women as inferior beings, quite unworthy of attracting a man's notice. I will say nothing of the efforts I have made to become worthy of you, they had their own reward, and I was only too happy in working and enduring hardships for your sake. But just look at the misery in which your desertion plunges me! A sailor cast on a desert island is less to be pitied than I am; I shall be obliged to live near you, to hear you, to witness another's bliss, to see you pass under my windows, leaning on the arm of my rival. Ah, death would be preferable to this daily torment. But I have not even the right to die, my poor parents have already so much to bear. What would it be, good heavens! should I condemn them to mourn a son?"

This lamentation, interrupted by sighs and tears, nearly broke Clementina's heart. The poor girl wept too, for she loved Léon with all her strength, but had forbidden herself to tell him so. More than once, seeing him half fainting before her, she was tempted to throw her arms round his neck, but the recollection of Fongas paralysed all her tender impulses.

"My poor friend," said she to him, "you misjudge me if you think me insensible to your grief. I have known you, Léon, from my infancy, I know all the loyalty, the delicacy of feeling, the noble and precious virtues you possess. From the time when you used to carry me in your arms to the poor, and yourself put a penny into my hand to teach me to give alms, I have never heard of a charitable action without instantly thinking of you. When you fought with a boy twice your own size, who had taken away my doll, I felt how noble a thing courage was, and how happy a woman must feel who had a brave man to protect her. Every action of

yours since then has served to augment my esteem and sympathy. Believe me it is neither unkindness nor ingratitude on my part which makes you suffer thus to-day. Alas ! I no longer belong to myself, I am under control, I resemble those automata which move without knowing why or wherefore. Yes, I feel within me a something more powerful than my liberty, and it is the will of another that guides me."

"If I were only sure you would be happy ! But no, this man for whom you are sacrificing me, will never understand the worth of a refined mind like yours ; he is a brute, a swash buckler—a drunkard."

"Pray, Léon ! remember he is entitled, at any rate, to all my respect."

"Respect—he ! and why ? I ask you in heaven's name, what do you see so respectable in the person of Fougas ? His age ? why he is younger than I am ; his talents ? he only shows them at table ; his education ? a fine one indeed ! His virtues ! I know very well what to think of his gratitude and delicacy."

"I have respected him, Léon, ever since I saw him lying in his coffin. It is a feeling that overpowers every other ; I can't account for it, but it takes possession of me."

"Very well, respect him as much as you like, give way to the superstition that dominates you. Look upon him as a miraculous sacred being preserved from the jaws of death to accomplish something great upon earth ! But this of itself, my dear Clementina, ought to act as a barrier between you and him, if Fougas is beyond the pale of humanity, if he is a phenomenon, a being set apart, a hero, a demi-god, a fetish, surely you cannot seriously think of ever becoming his wife ! I am only a man like any other, born to work, to suffer and to love. I love you, my darling ; oh, Clementina, can you not return my love ?"

"Rascal !" cried Fougas, throwing open the door. Clem-

entina gave a scream. Léon rose quickly to his feet, but the colonel had already seized him in his arms. The engineer was lifted in the air, balanced like an atom in the sun rays, and then thrown violently into the middle of the heliotropes, before he had time to say a single word. Poor Léon ! Poor heliotropes !

In less than a second, the young man was on his feet again ; he shook off the earth which had soiled his knees and elbows, drew near the window, and said in a low but steady voice—"Colonel Fongas, I regret sincerely that I ever restored you to life, but the folly that I then committed may not perhaps be irreparable ; we shall meet again soon. As to you, mademoiselle, again I repeat, I love you."

The colonel shrugged his shoulders and knelt down before the young girl on the very cushion which still bore the impress of Léon Renault. Mademoiselle Virginia Sambuco, drawn to the spot by the commotion, came down stairs like an avalanche, and overheard the following harangue—

"Idol of a noble heart ! Fongas returns to thee like the eagle to his eyrie. I have been rushing all over the world in pursuit of rank, wealth, and family, burning to lay them all at your feet. Fortune has been my slave ; she knows in what school I learnt to govern her. I have traversed Paris and Germany like a victorious meteor guided by its star. I have treated the highest powers as my equals, and have made the trumpet of Truth resound under the roof of kings. I have grappled upon base cupidity, and rescued from it, at least in part, the treasures it had stolen from too confiding honour. One single blessing is denied me, the son whom I had hoped to see, escapes the lynx-eyed love of a father. Nor did I find the former object of my first affections ; but, what matter ? I shall regret nothing, if only you will make up to me for all the rest. What are we waiting for ?—are you still deaf to the voice of that happiness which calls you ?

Let us fly to the temple of the law, you shall then follow me to the altar, a priest shall bless our vows, and we will go through life leaning on each other. I—like the oak which is the support of weakness, thou like the graceful ivy which adorns the emblem of vigour.”

Clementina remained some time without speaking, as if bewildered by the colonel's boisterous eloquence. “M. Fougas,” at length said she, “I have always obeyed you hitherto. I promise to obey you all my life. If you don't wish me to marry Léon, I will give him up. I love him, however, and one single word from his lips stirs my heart more than all the grand speeches you have made me.”

“Good—very good,” cried the aunt. “For my part, sir, though you have not done me the honour of consulting me, allow me to tell you what I think. My niece is not at all the wife to suit you ; were you richer than M. de Rothschild, and more illustrious than the Duke of Malakoff, I would never advise Clementina to marry you.”

“And why not, oh, most chaste Minerva ?”

“Because you would love her for a fortnight, and at the first sound of the cannon, you would be off to the wars ! You would abandon her, sir, like that poor Clementina of whose misfortunes we have heard.”

“Forsooth, madam, she was not so much to be pitied—why three months after Leipsic she married a fellow called Langevin, at Nancy.”

“Who do you say ?”

“I say she married a fellow called Langevin.”

“At Nancy ?”

“Yes ! at Nancy itself.”

“How very odd !”

“I should say it was shameful.”

“But this young woman—this girl—what was her name ?”

"I have told you scores of times—Clementina."

"Clementina what?"

"Clementina Pichon."

"Oh, heavens! My keys! Where are my keys? I was certain I had put them in my pocket! Clementina Pichon! M. Langevin! No, it is impossible—my head wanders! Oh, my child, bestir yourself; it concerns the happiness of your whole life! Where have you hidden my keys?—ah, here they are!"

Fougas leant forward and whispered in Clementina's ear—

"Is she subject to these attacks? One would imagine the poor old lady had gone mad."

Mademoiselle Sambuco had by this time opened a little rosewood desk. At a glance she picked out from the midst of a roll of papers one sheet grown yellow with age. "Yes! there is no mistake about it," she exclaimed, with a cry of delight. "Maria Clementina Pichon, legitimate daughter of Augustus Pichon, hotel-keeper, Rue des Merlettes, in the town of Nancy, married on the 11th January, 1814, to Louis Antony Langevin, military commissary—that is she, sir, is it not; dare you say I am mistaken?"

"Hullo! by what chance have my family papers fallen into your hands?"

"Poor Clementina! And you accused her of being untrue—don't you understand that you were reported killed, that she believed herself a widow, without having been a wife, that—"

"All right, all right! I forgive her—where is she? I should like to see her, to embrace her, to tell her—"

"She is dead, sir; dead three months after her marriage."

"Oh, the deuce!"

"In giving birth to a daughter."

"Who is my daughter—I should have preferred a son, but no matter! Where is she? I should like to see her, to embrace her, to tell her—"

"She, alas! is no more—but I can take you to her grave."

"But how, in the name of fortune, do you happen to know her?"

"Because she married my brother."

"Without my consent? No matter! At any rate, she has left some children?"

"One only."

"A son!—he is my grandson!"

"No; a daughter."

"No matter—she is my granddaughter. I should have preferred a grandson; but where is she? I should like to see her, to embrace her, to tell her—"

"Embrace her if you will.—she is called Clementina, after her grandmother, and there she stands."

"Clementina?—this accounts for that strange resemblance! But then I can't marry her. No matter—Clementina, come to my arms—embrace your grandfather!"

The poor child had not been able to understand a single word of this conversation, where events followed each other like tiles falling on a windy day. They had always spoken of M. Langevin as her maternal grandfather, and now it would seem as if her mother had been the daughter of Colonel Fougas.

But from the outset she had realised that she could not marry the colonel, and that she should soon be the wife of Léon Renault. It was, therefore, with a feeling of joy and gratitude that she threw herself into the arms of the young old man. "Ah," said she, "I have loved you from the first, and respected you as a grandfather."

"And I, my dear child, have behaved like an old fool. All men are brutes, and all women are angels. You guessed, with the delicate penetration of your sex, that you owed me respect, and I—idiot that I am—guessed nothing at all. By

Jove, but for the venerable aunt who stands there we should have been in a sad predicament."

"No," replied the aunt, "you would have discovered the truth in looking over the family papers."

"As if I should ever have looked at them! Just fancy, here have I been searching for my heirs in the department of the Meurthe, when all the while I had left my family at Fontainebleau—idiot that I am! but no matter! Clementina, you shall be rich—you shall marry the man you love. Where is he, that fine fellow—I wish to see him—to embrace him—to tell him—"

"My dear sir, you have just thrown him out of the window."

"I—oh, by the way, yes, that is true—I had quite forgotten that. Happily, he was not hurt, and I will find him and repair my folly. You shall marry each other as soon as you like—the two weddings shall be on the same day. But no—what am I talking about—I am not going to be married: bye-bye, my darling granddaughter. Mademoiselle Sanbucco, you are a good old aunt—embrace me!"

He ran off to the Renaults' house, and Gothon, who saw him coming, rushed down to bar his progress. "Are you not ashamed," said she, "to behave in this way towards those who restored you to life? Ah, if they only had it to do again, the house would never be turned upside down a second time again for your sake! Poor madame is crying her eyes out, monsieur is tearing his hair, and M. Léon has just sent two officers in search of you. What have you been doing since the morning?"

Fougas twisted her round, and found himself face to face with the engineer, who, hearing angry voices, and seeing the colonel eager and animated, expected some fresh aggression, and did not wait for the first blow. A hand-to-hand struggle took place in the passage, amidst Gothon's screams joined to

those of M. and Madame Renault, who were crying murder. Léon fought and struggled, and from time to time hit out vigorously on the body of the enemy, till at last he was obliged to give in.

The colonel ended by throwing him down on the ground, and flooring him, as they say at Toulouse. Then he kissed him on both cheeks and said—"Ah, you rascal of a boy, you shall listen to me. I am Clementina's grandfather, and I give her to you. You shall marry her to-morrow if you like. Do you hear? Got up, man, and don't give me any more blows; it almost amounts to parricide." Mademoiselle Sambuco and Clementina arrived in the midst of the general stupefaction. They put some order into Fougas's narrative, which was becoming intricate as regards genealogy.

Léon's seconds now made their appearance on the scene; they had not found the enemy at his hotel, and had returned to report progress. They were treated to a spectacle of perfect happiness, and Léon invited them to the wedding.

"Friends," said Fougas, "you will witness Nature undeceived, blessing the chains of Love."

CHAPTER XX

A CLAP OF THUNDER IN A CLEAR BLUE SKY.

"**MADemoiselle VIRGINIA SAMBUCO** has the honour to announce to you the marriage of her niece, Mademoiselle Clementina Sambuco, to M. Léon Renault, civil engineer.

"**M. and Madame Renault** have the honour to announce to you the marriage of their son, M. Léon Renault to Mademoiselle Clementina Sambuco.

"They invite you to be present at the nuptial benediction,

which will be given on the 16th of September, 1859, in the parish church of St. Maxence, at eleven o'clock precisely."

Fougas insisted that his name should appear in the invitations to the wedding, and they had all the trouble in the world to dissuade him from it. Madame Renault discussed the subject with him for two weary hours; she explained to him that in the eyes of the world, as in the eyes of the law, Clementina was M. Langevin's granddaughter; besides which M. Langevin had behaved very honourably when he legitimised by marriage a child that was not his own, and finally that the publishing of a family secret of such a nature would be a scandal from beyond the grave as it were, and would tarnish the memory of poor Clementina Pichon.

The colonel replied with all the warmth of a young man, and the obstinacy of an old one—"Nature has her rights, they rank before social conventionalities, and are a thousand times more exalted. The honour of her I called my *Æglæ*, is dearer to me than all the treasures of this world, and if any one dares to impugn it, I am ready to break his head. No, yielding to the ardour of my vows, she only conformed to the customs of a grand epoch in which the uncertainty of life and the continuance of war simplified all formalities. And I do not choose that my great grandchildren, yet to be born, should be ignorant that the blood of Fougas flowed in their veins. Your Langevin is an interloper, who slipped surreptitiously into my family. A commissary is almost as bad as a suttler—I trample under foot the ashes of Langevin."

The obstinate fellow would not give in to all Madame Renault's reasonings, but he allowed himself to be overcome by Clementina's entreaties. The young creole coaxed him with irresistible grace. "You good grandfather, you dear, handsome grandfather, you dear old baby of a grandfather, we shall have to send you back to school if you are not reasonable."

She would sit by him, and give him little playful taps on the cheek, the colonel would be sulky at first, but his heart soon melted, and then he would cry like a child. These little demonstrations did not add to Léon's happiness, indeed, I may say his pleasure was somewhat diminished by them. He never doubted the love of his darling, nor Fougas's loyalty, and he was even obliged to confess that between a grandfather and granddaughter the closest intimacy is natural, and ought not to offend any one. But the situation was so novel and so uncommon that it required time for him to analyse his sentiments, and forget his sorrows. This grandfather, for whom he had paid twenty-five louis, and the lobe of whose ear he had broken, for whom he had purchased a last resting-place in the cemetery at Fontainebleau ; this ancestor, younger than himself, whom he had seen so excited, whom he had thought amusing, then dangerous and finally insupportable ; this venerable head of a family, who had begun by proposing for Clementina's hand, and ended by throwing his future grandson into the bed of heliotropes, could scarcely be entitled all at once to unmitigated respect or unrestricted affection.

M. and Madame Renault preached submission and deference to their son ; they represented M. Fougas as a relation for whom allowances should be made. "A few days' patience," said the good mother ; "he will not stay long with us ; he is a soldier who would no more be able to live out of the army than a fish out of water."

But at the bottom of their hearts Léon's parents cherished a bitter remembrance of all their griefs and troubles. Fougas had been the scourge of the family, and the wounds he had made were not to be healed in a single day. Even Gothou owed him a grudge, though she did not say so ; she contented herself by heaving deep sighs when she was at Mademoiselle Sambuco's, preparing the wedding feast.

"Ah, my poor Célestin," said she to her assistant, "what an odd sort of grandfather we are going to have to be sure."

The only person truly at his case was Fongas himself; he had, so to speak, passed a sponge over all his misdemeanours; he bore no one any malice for any ill that he had done them. Most paternal in his manner to Clementina, most amiable to M. and Madame Renault, he evinced towards Léon the frankest and most cordial friendship.

"My dear fellow," said he, "I have studied you, and I know you. I like you very much, you deserve to be happy, and you will be so; you will soon find that when you bought me for twenty-five louis, you did a good stroke of business. If gratitude were driven out of the world, she would find a last refuge in the heart of Fongas!"

Three days before the marriage, Maître Bonnavet informed the family that the colonel had paid a visit to his office to talk over the marriage settlements. Hardly had he cast his eyes over the roll of stamped paper, than crack went the document in pieces into the fire. "Mr. Scribe," said he, "be good enough to recommence your work of art. Fongas's grandchild is not going to marry with only eight thousand francs a-year for her fortune. Nature and affection bestow a million upon her; here it is!"

Thereupon he took out of his pocket a draft upon the bank for a million, strode proudly up and down the office, knocking his heels together, and threw a note for a thousand francs on the desk of the clerks, crying in his loudest tones—"Children of the worshipful company of scribes, here is something for you to drink the Emperor's health, and success to the grand army."

The Renault family made an energetic protest against this excessive generosity, and Clementina, pruned by her lover, in the presence of Mademoiselle Sambuco, had a long

discussion on the subject with her youthful and terrible grandfather. She remarked to him, that being only twenty-four, he would marry some day himself, and that his wealth belonged to his future children.

"I should not wish," said she, "your children to accuse me of robbing them. Keep your million for my little uncles and aunts."

But on this point Fougas would not yield an inch. "Are you laughing at me?" said he to Clementina, "do you think I should be such a fool as to marry now? I don't intend to live like a Trappist, and at my age, and with my figure, I can still make myself agreeable to the fair sex. Mars does not borrow Hymen's torch to light him in his promenades with Venus! What is man's object in marrying? to create a family. I am a father in the comparative degree, and in a year or two I shall hope to be so in the superlative—great grandfather! A fine rank that for a trooper of twenty-five! When I am forty-five or fifty I shall be a great great grandfather; at seventy—well the French language has no word to express what I may become; but we will order those chatterers at the Academy to invent one. Are you afraid I shall be destitute in my old age? I have my pay in the first place, and the pension attached to my officers' cross. At the age of Anchises and Nestor I shall have my retiring pension. Add to that the two hundred and fifty thousand francs the King of Prussia gave me, and you will see that I shall not only have bread, but cheese with it, to the end of my days. Besides, there is the piece of ground in perpetuity which your husband paid for in advance in the cemetery at Fontainebleau. Well, with all that, and my simple tastes, I am not likely to run through my principal."

In spite of themselves, they were obliged to do as he wished, and accept his million. This act of liberality made

a great sensation in the town, and the name of Fougas, already so well known in other ways, acquired fresh laurels.

All Fontainobleau wished to be present at Clementina's wedding. People even came from Paris to it. The bride's witnesses were Marshal the Duke of Solferino, and the celebrated Karl Nibor, elected a few days before member of the Academy of Sciences. Léon modestly kept to the old friends he had chosen from the first, M. Audret, the architect, and Maître Bonnivet, the notary.

The mayor donned his new scarf. The curé addressed the young couple in a touching discourse on the inexhaustible goodness of Providence, who from time to time permits a miracle to be worked in favour of good Christians.

Fougas, who had never performed any of his religious duties since 1801, soaked two pocket-handkerchiefs with his tears. "One often loses sight of what one really most esteems," said he, as he came out of church.

A feast worthy of Pantagruel, presided over by Mademoiselle Virginia Sambuco, in a violet silk dress, quickly followed the ceremony. Twenty-four persons were present at this family gathering, amongst them the new colonel of the 23rd, and M. du Marnet, who had nearly recovered from his wounds. Fougas lifted his napkin with a certain anxiety. He had hoped the Marshal would have brought him his brevet of general of brigade. His speaking countenance betrayed a lively disappointment, when he saw his plate contained nothing!

The Duke of Solferino, who had just seated himself in the place of honour, perceived his change of countenance, and said aloud—"Don't be impatient, old comrade; I know what you are looking for. It was not my fault that this *fête* still wants something to complete our happiness. The Minister of War was absent when I went to see him; they told me at the office that there is a hitch about your promotion, only a

question of form, however, and that you would receive a letter within the next twenty-four hours."

"The deuce take all red-tapists," cried Fougas. "They have everything necessary from the certificate of my birth to the copy of my colonel's brevet. You will see, it is a certificate of vaccination or some such worthless paper, they are making all this fuss about."

"Come, come, have patience, young man! You have plenty of time to wait; you are not like me. Had it not been for the Italian campaign, which enabled me to snatch my Marshal's *baton*, they would have slit my ear and sent me packing like an old troop horse, under the pretext that I was sixty-five years old. You are not twenty-five, and you are on the point of becoming a general of brigade. The Emperor made you that promise in my presence. In three or four years you will have the gold stars, if ill luck does not come in the way. After that there only needs you should obtain a command and a lucky campaign to become Marshal of France and a senator, which is not to be despised."

"Yes," replied Fougas, "I shall come to that, not only because I am the youngest officer of my rank in the service, that I have gone through the whole of the great war, and studied under the great master in Bellona's battlefields; but, above all, because fate has marked me for her own. Why have bullets spared me in more than twenty battles! Why have I traversed oceans of bronze and steel without ever having received even a single scratch? It is because I have my star even as he had. It is true his was a greater one, but it set at St. Helena, while mine still shines on the horizon. If Dr. Nibor restored me to life by a few drops of hot water, it was because my destiny was unfulfilled. If the will of the French people has re-established the imperial dynasty, it was to give me the opportunity of showing my courage in the conquest of Europe, which we are about to

undertake! Long live the Emperor—and myself! I shall be a prince or a duke before ten years are out, and I shall even try to be present at the distribution of crowns! Why not? In that case I shall adopt Clementina's eldest son; we will call him Peter Victor II., and he shall succeed me on the throne as Louis XV. succeeded his great grandfather, Louis XIV."

As he ended this tirade, a gendarme entered the room, asked for Colonel Fougas, and put into his hand a despatch from the Ministry of War.

"By Jove!" cried the Marshal, "it would be a good joke if your promotion should arrive at the end of such an harangue. If so, for a certainty we shall all have to bow before your star; the Magi would be nothing in comparison with ourselves."

"Read it yourself, Marshal," said he, handing over the large sheet of paper. "Or rather, no! I have always looked death bravely in the face—I won't turn away from this accursed paper which may kill me."

"Colonel,—In preparing the imperial decree which was to give you the rank of general of brigade, I find an insurmountable obstacle in your certificate of birth. From this document, it appears you were born in 1789, and that you are at present seventy years of age. Now, the limit for a colonel being fixed at sixty, for generals of brigade at sixty-two, and for generals of division at sixty-five, I feel myself obliged to put you on the reserve list, with the rank of colonel. I know, sir, how little your apparent age warrants this proceeding, and I sincerely regret that France should thus be deprived of the services of a man of your merit and your vigour. It is also true that an exception in your favour would provoke no ill feeling in the army; on the contrary, it would be met with universal sympathy. But the

law is immutable, and the Emperor himself can neither violate nor elude it. The impossibility which results is so absolute that if, in your ardour to serve your country, you should consent to give up your epaulets and commence a new career, your services could not be accepted by any regiment of the army. It is fortunate, sir, that the Emperor's government has been able to provide you with the means of subsistence by obtaining from H.R.H. the Prince Regent of Prussia the indemnity which was your due, for there is no civil appointment which can be given to a man of seventy even by favour. You will object very justly that the laws and rules date from an epoch when experiments in resuscitation had not as yet produced any favourable results. But the law is made for the many, and takes no note of exceptions. No doubt if the cases of resuscitation occurred in sufficient numbers it might then be modified.

Accept, &c., &c."

A dead silence followed the reading of this letter. The gendarme still stood there, like a soldier at attention, waiting for Fougas's receipt. The colonel asked for a pen and ink, signed the receipt, handed it with a piece of money to the gendarme, and, in a voice full of suppressed emotion, said—"You are a happy fellow! You are not forbidden to serve your country! Well," continued he, addressing the Marshal, "What do you say to this?"

"What would you have me say, now, old fellow; it is beyond me. There is no disputing the law, it is absolute. It was very stupid of us not to have thought of all this before. But who the deuce, seeing a strong, active young fellow like you, would ever have remembered the age for retiring?"

The two colonels confessed that this objection had never occurred to them, but, having been raised, they had nothing

to say to it. Neither one nor the other would dare to enlist Fougas as a private, notwithstanding his physical strength and his twenty-four years.

"Then," shouted Fougas, "let them kill me. I cannot turn to weighing sugar or planting cabbages. It was as a soldier I first entered life, a soldier I must remain, or die ! What else can I do or become ? Go into foreign service ? Never ! Moreau's fate is still before my eyes. Oh, Fortune ! what have I done to thee that thou hast cast me down so low at the very moment I was expecting to be raised so high ?"

Clementina tried to console him by saying a few kind words. "You shall always remain with us," said she, "we will find you a nice little wife, and you two shall bring up your children together. In your leisure moments you shall write the history of your life, and relate all the grand deeds you have done. You lack nothing—youth, health, fortune, family, everything that constitutes the happiness of mankind is yours ; why, then should you be unhappy ?"

Léon and his parents spoke in the same terms. Everything was forgotten in presence of so real a sorrow and such deep dejection. By degrees the colonel recovered himself and even sang at dessert a little song which he had improvised for the occasion.

Let's drink to these fortunate lovers
Who now on this thrice blessed day,
Have singed with the torch of chaste Hymen
The wings with which Cupid would stray.
And he, little volatile boy-god,
From his home no longer may run,
Enchained as he is by this marriage
Where genius and beauty are one.

He'll make it henceforth his endeavour
To keep Joy in Loyalty's power,
Forgetting his naughty old habit
Of roaming from flower to flower.

And Clementine makes the task easy,
For roses spring up at her smile :
And thence the young rascal can steal them
As well as in Venus's isle.

The antiquated poetry was loudly applauded, but poor Fougas smiled sadly, spoke very little, and did not get in the least intoxicated. He took part in the festivities of the day, but was no longer the brilliant companion who had hitherto inspired one and all with his impetuous gaiety.

The Marshal took him aside during the evening, and said—
“Of what are you thinking?”

“I am thinking of those veterans who were lucky enough to fall at Waterloo with their faces to the enemy. That old fool of a German who preserved me for the benefit of posterity rendered me but a sorry service. Mark me, Leblanc, a man ought to live in his own times! later on it is too late!”

“Come, Fougas, no nonsense; there is no need to despair! I shall go to the Emperor to-morrow; something will be done; they will find there are not so many men like you in France that they can afford to cast you aside.”

“Thanks; you are an old, true friend. There were five hundred thousand like you in 1812, now there only remain two, or rather, I should say, one and a half.”

Towards ten o'clock, M. Rollon, M. du Marnet and Fougas escorted the Marshal to the railway station. At parting the colonel embraced his old comrade, and promised to be reasonable.

The train left, and the three colonels returned on foot to the town. While passing the house of M. Rollon, Fougas said to his successor—“You are not hospitable to-day. You have never offered us a glass of that fine Andaye brandy.”

“I thought you did not seem inclined to drink,” replied Colonel Rollon. “You took nothing in your coffee, nor after it—but pray come in.”

"The air has made me feel thirsty."

"Ah, that is a good sign."

He clinked his glass against theirs in an absent sort of manner, but scarcely wetted his lips with the liquid. He remained for some time gazing at the colours, fondly caressing the staff, unfurling the silk, and counting the various holes that balls and bullets had made therein; still not one tear did he shed. "Decidedly," said he, "the brandy has burnt my throat. I am only half a man to-day. Good-night, gentlemen."

"Wait, we will return with you."

"Many thanks, but it is only a step to my hotel."

"Never mind. But what an idea to stay at an hotel when you have two houses here at your disposal."

"True, but to-morrow I leave."

The next morning, about eleven o'clock, Léon, as happy as a king, was completing his toilet, when a telegram was brought to him. He opened it without noticing that it was addressed to Colonel Fougas, and uttered a cry of joy. This is the laconic message which caused him so much delight:

"To Colonel Fougas—Fontainebleau.

"Just left Emperor's study. You are made general of brigade, by foreign title, waiting something better later on. Legislative Council will modify law.

"LEBLANC."

Léon dressed himself, flew to the Hôtel du Cadran-Bleu, rushed up to the colonel's room, and found him—dead in his bed.

It was said in Fontainebleau, that M. Nibor made a *post mortem* examination, and discovered some serious complaint caused by the dessication. Some people, however, maintained that Colonel Fougas had committed suicide. This

much is certain, that Maître Bonnivet received by post a kind of will drawn up in these terms—

“I bequeath my heart to my country, my remembrance to Nature, my example to the army, my hatred to perfidious Albion, a thousand crowns to Gothon, and two hundred thousand francs to the 23rd regiment. Long live the Emperor all the same!

“FOUGAS.”

Resuscitated on the 17th of August, between three and four o'clock in the morning, he expired for good and all on the 17th of the following month. His second life had lasted barely thirty-one days. We must do him the justice to say he had made good use of his time! He lies in the piece of ground which Léon Renault had originally purchased for him. His granddaughter Clementina left off her mourning a few years ago, and is now a loved and happy wife.

SAVING A DAUGHTER'S DOWRY.

CHAPTER I.

EVERY one knows that the 23rd of June, 1855, was a Saturday, and that the feast of St. John the Baptist fell on the following Sunday. A thing less known is the extreme prudence and shrewdness of M. John Baptist Penouille, a partner in the firm of Penouille, Brothers, & Co., and late judge of the Tribunal of Commerce. The celebrated M. Prudhomme was but a simpleton as compared to him; for M. Prudhomme has often moved in the dark, but never M. Penouille. M. Prudhomme, led away by the heat of discussion, has sometimes recklessly blown his nose in the first corner of his handkerchief that turned up; whilst M. Penouille, whenever there is any occasion for it, carefully unfolds a large Dutch linen handkerchief, examines the mark when there is light enough; or applies his nail to the hem if in the dark, and ascertains that he is not using the right for the wrong side. Then only does he bring the handkerchief in contact with a huge cartilage, and make the air resound with the echoes of a melodious flourish.

M. Penouille has never missed a train; he has never passed the Bourse without regulating his watch by its clock, nor been near his tobacconist's without examining his snuff-box. He feels in his pockets before riding in an omnibus,

and if he enters a pastry-cook's, he does not bite into a bun until he has ascertained the price. At night, when on the point of going to sleep, he is not satisfied with blowing out his candle, but flattens the wick between his thumb and finger, heroically burning them at the same time, for he has such a fear of fire !

On the 23rd of June, 1855, this discreet citizen strolled dreamily along the boulevards. His stomach preceded him, and his wife, a very comfortable looking person of forty, walked on his left side, without, however, taking his arm. M. Penouille was clean shaven, and his broad, bluish chin suggested somehow the azure of the sky. His large eyes gazed at the shops with bovine serenity ; his left hand was buried in his pocket ; his right one, encased in a cotton glove, swung regularly by the side of his body, like the pendulum of an enormous Swiss clock. His light coat, thrown open by the morning breeze, disclosed a buff waistcoat and some heavy trinkets. The brim of his hat was broad enough to serve as a parasol. He wore a pair of roomy white trousers, and gray canvas boots. I do not think I shall surprise you by adding that he wore gold spectacles.

Madame Penouille, short, stout, fair, and covered with freckles, walked in her corsage like a knight in his armour. She carried her head aloft so as not to lose an inch of her height ; perhaps also to admire, the more easily, her husband's radiant face. For twenty-two years John Baptist had been, without any competitor, the ideal of his Cunegund. In this model household the honeymoon was permanent. It was kept somewhere in the kitchen, on a shelf, amongst the copper saucepans. Madame Penouille's only faults were a too great liking for puce-coloured silk dresses, and piling up too many flowers on the same bonnet. But what would you ? We are none of us perfect.

This married couple, who had breakfasted at home at La Villette, walked side by side as far as the Porte St. Denis. Then Cunegund gave an order to her milliner ; close to the Gymnase theatre M. Penouille entered a shop and made some observations to his tailor ; but the main object of this early walk was the Palais-Royal, to order at Chevet's some delicacies for the morrow's dinner, to celebrate the anniversary of M. Penouille's patron saint.

Arrived at the corner of the Rue Vivienne, the old man stopped short, his nose raised in the air like a dog spotting a squirrel. He steadied his spectacles which had imperceptibly slipped towards the tip of his nose ; then he pointed with his finger to a large gold-lettered sign set up on the first floor balcony. It was a sign such as our ancestors knew not how to make : one of those provoking sign-boards which attract the attention of the passer-by, pouncing upon him, so to say, in the street. Not only did it occupy the whole frontage of the house on the boulevards, but it repeated itself in full along the side in the Rue Vivienne.

"Kindly read this inscription," said M. Penouille to Madame Penouille.

" 'Cocheret, surgeon dentist of the Faculty of Paris.' You have not got the toothache, my love, have you ?"

"Why should I have the toothache ? and now, look here."

" 'Cocheret, surgeon——.' The same thing for a change. Well !"

"It is a masterly sign," continued M. Penouille, proceeding slowly down the Rue Vivienne. "Acknowledge that it is difficult to pass near without noticing it."

"Certainly, it stares one full in the face."

"The locality is excellent for a dentist. I bet that more than fifty thousand people pass by here daily, I mean in ordinary times, for during the Exhibition, there are double that number,"

"Yes, my dear."

"Out of a hundred thousand people how many are likely to have the toothache? Suppose that we say fifty. One out of two thousand, is that too many?"

"No, my dear."

"At five francs a-piece—for all is paid for according to the locality—let us say two hundred and fifty francs per day. If you think that I exaggerate at all, you have only to speak."

"You understand all that better than I do, my dear. But what are you driving at?"

"To prove to you that this M. Cocheret must earn a good income. Now I wonder whether he is married."

"But what is that to us, my love?"

"It is not such an indifferent matter as you think. Allow me to put a question to you without leaving the domain of supposition. Mother of a family, would you refuse your only child to a man who can earn two hundred and fifty francs a-day?"

"My daughter! What are you thinking of? And poor Gandon?"

"Gandon, madame, would decidedly be a too expensive son-in-law."

"And in what country could you have a notary for nothing?"

"I have maturely considered young Gandon's future prospects. He has been a head clerk for three years, he is going to negotiate about a practice in Paris; his parents will assist him, it is their duty. But considering the sums asked in these days, I defy you to pull us through with less than a hundred thousand francs. Supposing that I found this money, which would be extremely painful to me, do you believe that notaries earn two hundred and fifty francs a day?"

"I believe everything you wish, my dear."

"What is a dentist's business—I am speaking of a good business like this one? It is a notary's practice, costing nothing to buy, and which brings in two hundred and fifty francs a day."

"Certainly, my dear."

"The advantage of a dentist over a notary is, that he can marry without bringing his father-in-law to the workhouse by snatching from him, under pretence of a dowry, a hundred thousand francs of ready money."

Madame Penouille placed herself in front of her husband in the respectful attitude of a recruit who looks at the Vendome column. "Are you in earnest?" asked she, "are you thinking of breaking off with young Gandon?"

"Go, madame, go about your business, and forget all that we have said. I was joking."

He took leave of Cunegund, crossed the Place de la Bourse, regained the Boulevards by the Rue Montmartre, and walked sedately towards the lodge of M. Cocheret's concierge. Either this gentleman is married, thought he, or he is a bachelor. If he is a bachelor, I will make inquiries concerning him. With this he asked the concierge if Madame Cocheret was at home. The concierge answered that he only knew M. Cocheret, dentist and bachelor. M. Penouille thereupon went up to the first floor.

The dentist's waiting-room occupied the corner of the house, it had four windows. The carpet was of Aubusson manufacture; the furniture and the crimson rep curtains appeared to be quite new. Three large richly gilded frames were hanging against the walls: the first contained a pink and white sea-view by M. Gudin; the second enclosed a very clever picture by M. Biard; the third surrounded a portrait as shiny as a piece of china. It represented a fat young man, red and smiling, painted full length by M. Dubufe. M. Penouille, who was a connoisseur, thought it admirable.

The fat young man appeared to him a desirable son-in-law ; the livery of the valet who was sorting some papers on a little round table dazzled M. Penouille completely. " My daughter would be comfortable here," muttered he to himself. He valued the furniture at twenty thousand francs. He knew how to cause the servant to talk, and soon learnt that his place was a good one. M. Cocheret engaged him at the rate of eight hundred francs a-year, while Madame Penouille had never paid more than thirty francs a month to her cook.

He had arrived so far in his reflections when a door opened ; and M. Cocheret, very like the portrait, advanced towards him, arrayed in one of those flowered dressing-gowns that are the usual uniform of dentists and conjurors. The old man, forewarned though he was, almost thought that he saw an Oriental prince appear. He followed the dressing-gown into a sumptuous consulting room, where three ebony show-cases exposed to his gaze the dazzling bright instruments of the operator. He settled himself cosily in the big arm-chair, and began the conversation with that pompous prudence from which he has never departed.

" Sir," said he, " had I been the first comer, I would not have presumed to enter your house without a plausible motive. I have not the toothache ; my teeth are excellent, though they are not quite new ; for I have used them for fifty-three years without interruption. I was passing along the boulevard with my wife, when I noticed your sign, and I at once desired to make your acquaintance. I am very impulsive, though cautious, and I could not resist the temptation. I am here as a neighbour : not that we are exactly neighbours, but in Paris, according to some author or other, there is no longer any distance. I am M. Penouille, partner in the great sugar-refinery at La Villette. If I am not personally a good client for dentists I am nevertheless in a position to bring you a good connec-

tion; for we are thirty-eight in our family, such as you see me."

M. Cocheret, contrary to the habits of members of his profession, spoke but little. He did not turn his visitor out because one respects, in spite of oneself, a man who wears gold spectacles; but he answered discreetly and by monosyllables to the sugar refiner's questions. He allowed him to suppose that he was much occupied, that he had but little time at his disposal, and that he devoted his spare moments to a work in three volumes on second dentition.

CHAPTER II.

THE dentist's reserve and coolness thoroughly vanquished M. Penouille. He was one who understood men; he did not like the loquacious, and he despised the thoughtless. Nevertheless, as he was full of wisdom, and well aware that a man's worth is to be found neither in his face, nor his mind, but in his cash-box, he wished to ascertain M. Cocheret's income as near as possible. He had not the right to question him; on what pretence could he ask him to show his account books. He had recourse therefore to stratagem. "Sir," said he, "you already enjoy a great reputation in Paris. It appears to me, however, that you have not been long in practice?"

"Two years," answered M. Cocheret.

"Did you buy some one else's practice, or did you found one of your own?"

"I founded my own."

"Well done, young man! it's characteristic of both of us, for I, such as you behold me, have also been the architect of my own fortune. When I began business I had nothing, and you?"

"But little."

"I congratulate you."

Whilst speaking, M. Penouille examined the dentist's furniture like an auctioneer. He reckoned that the splendid surroundings of his future son-in-law might be fairly valued at eighty thousand francs. The rent amounted to six thousand francs at least. The gentleman's annual expenditure for his food as well as his clothes, would amount to fifteen thousand francs, for he was well dressed and well fed. M. Penouille reckoned on his fingers and easily convinced himself that M. Cocheret had spent more than a hundred thousand francs in two years. "If he has spent them," thought he, "it is because he has earned them. I was sure of it ! he as good as makes gold."

To see the worthy man walking backwards and forwards in the drawing-room, you would not have suspected that he was thus calculating. He fingered everything, he spoke on all sorts of subjects, in fact, he affected a homely artlessness. "Sir," he observed, in a simple yet noble manner, "furniture is, so to speak, the criterion of good taste." Had his been one of those superficial characters, such as are often met with in this world, he would perhaps have omitted to make inquiries concerning his son-in-law. Had he been confiding like most parents, he would have asked M. Cocheret for the names of some respectable people who could give information concerning his conduct. He did better, he obtained from him, in a masterly and indirect way, the names of all his tradespeople. He learnt that the dressing gown came from Girbs, the slippers from Lorski, the furniture from Rosenquin, the surgical instruments from Perroy, and that the carpets had been supplied by Juliette Brothers.

He committed all these names to memory, and said laughingly to himself: "Perhaps the young man is in debt. Now were I to go and make inquiries of his friends they would not

tell me the truth, they might not even know anything about it, but his tradespeople, persons of respectability and long standing do not deceive themselves, and will not deceive me. When one owes money, to whom does one owe it? why, to one's tradespeople!" He did not forget to find out whether the landlord lived in the house; he knew that landlords never allow themselves to have any illusions, and that they take care to inquire four times a year as to their tenant's solvency. At last he took his departure, and walked sedately along, till he came to the nearest reading room, where he consulted the directory of 25,000 addresses; he then got into the first empty cab that passed, and called successively on all those persons who had helped to furnish M. Cocheret's establishment. The preamble that M. Penouille improvised for this occasion, will give you a good idea of his diplomatic talents.

"Sir," said he, on entering M. Perroy's office, "I am M. Penouille of La Villette, late judge of the Tribunal of Commerce of the department of the Seine. An honourable capitalist, a friend of mine, is about to bestow his daughter on M. Cocheret, one of your customers. Among rich folk one should speak the truth, and I trust that you will tell me without reserve all that you know concerning this excellent young man."

M. Perroy, M. Girbs, and all the tradesmen were as loud in their praises of M. Cocheret as if they had been his best friends. • The most eloquent was without doubt the landlord, a short old man with sharp eyes, named Torlottin.

"Had I a daughter," said he, "I would give her to him. But I have only two sons, and they are in the Crimea."

Whilst the cautious father-in-law collected all this information, M. Cocheret was trying to guess the object of the enigmatic visit that he had received. His first idea was that he had had to do with a tiresome intruder or with a clever

hoaxer. Then he made sure that his watch and jewels were safe. Eventually he became thoroughly frightened; he examined his conscience, and asked himself if he had not spoken lightly concerning the Venetian Republic, and whether this pretended Penouille was not in reality an inquisitor belonging to the Council of Ten. In the midst of his reflections, the door opened, and M. Penouille reappeared, more solemn than ever. He held out his hand and said, with mild and friendly majesty, "My young friend, to-morrow we celebrate the anniversary of my patron saint. If you are not already engaged for Sunday, I would ask you to dine with us, without any ceremony; we shall be thirty-nine, counting yourself. Here is my card, I will introduce you to Madame Penouille, who is the phoenix of wives, and to my daughter Pauline, whom we have nicknamed among ourselves the pearl of La Villette."

The dentist was on the point of asking for an explanation, but M. Penouille at once stopped him. "Allow me," said he, "to envelop myself in a diplomatic silence. If the future contains a surprise for you, it will not be an unpleasant one. Rest satisfied with knowing that in declining my invitation, you may perhaps interfere with your own happiness."

M. Cocheret, wishing to see how far the joke would go, eventually consented to accept.

The following day from nine a.m. the Penouille clan assembled at the residence of the head of the family. The hero of the day, the venerable John Baptist, in blue coat with gilt buttons, presided at the fête. He had informed neither his wife nor his daughter of the surprise he had in store for them at six o'clock. But when he saw Leopold Gandon arrive, at twelve o'clock, he allowed that mysterious smile, which Egyptian sculptors have delineated on the face of the sphinx, to settle on his lips.

Leopold Gandon was a young man of thirty, neither hand-

some nor bad-looking, but tall, well-proportioned, well-dressed, and well brought up. His father, inventor of the Rainbow candles, and one of the most honourable manufacturers of the suburbs, had made him study well in a Parisian college. He became a licentiate of law in 1849, and eventually first clerk in Maître Ledoux's office, where he hopes to be master some day or other. Meanwhile, previously to burying himself alive in the uniform worries of a notary's existence, he goes into society, leads off the cotillion, plays whist, and arranges acting charades when asked. Parents court him because he will be rich, and young girls, because he is so nice.

Mademoiselle Penouille seemed born for him; you would have thought that she had been made to order for Leopold Gandon. She was just tall enough for him to kiss her forehead without stooping. Without being one of those women that one cannot help noticing in the street, she had like him fine eyes, a quantity of beautiful hair, thirty-two pearl white teeth, and an agreeable and intellectual face. She had known Gandon from childhood, and like him she had been to school in Paris; she was no more a fool, nor anywise less amiable than himself. She was twenty-two and he thirty, and she thought it quite a natural thing to become his wife. Her marriage with him had been decided by a tacit agreement; the Gandons and the Penouilles looked forward to it with pleasure, but without eagerness and without anxiety, as a natural event which was to take place.

Leopold did not court her, but he dined by her side every Sunday, and kissed her at night when going away. I know not if they loved one another; they did not even know themselves, because they saw each other so often and without constraint. On M. Penouille's fête day they played together at battledore and shuttlecock, at skittles and other games; they strolled alone to the end of the garden into the

large summer house, and the sparrows round about did not hear the sound of a single kiss. You will know by this, that they were born to marry one another and have a large family.

Half an hour before dinner M. Penouille, who was prudence itself, thought it might perhaps be dangerous to separate two hearts so well formed for each other. He had formally resolved not to give his daughter any dowry; but if, supposing an impossibility, Gandon loved her sufficiently well, to take her without a dowry, would it not be wiser to give her ~~to~~ Gandon? He joined the young fellow in the garden, took him paternally by the arm, walked him off into a secluded nook, and questioned him with that caution, which was, so to say, his greatest ornament. "My young friend," said he, "are there occasions when a love-sick notary marries a girl without a dowry?"

"Certainly there are," answered Gandon.

"Ah! ah!" exclaimed the old fellow with a satisfied smile, "you please me, Leopold, and your reply does you honour."

The chief clerk, who knew M. Penouille's mania, and who hoped to overcome it by the force of argument, hastened to add: "A notary can marry a girl without a fortune, providing he has paid for his practice. If otherwise, no! You know business too well," continued he, "not to understand me. For instance, a young notary owes a hundred thousand francs to his predecessor. If he arranges at first only to pay the interest on the money, he withdraws every year five or six thousand francs from the proceeds of his practice, and in this way seriously inconveniences himself. If, on the other hand, he desires to pay off the amount in a few years, he may disburse for this purpose, perhaps, ten thousand francs annually, and thus he exhausts his revenue; I see but one path for him to take, that is, to marry a respectable woman with a hundred thousand francs; a wife for happiness,

a hundred thousand francs for peace and quietness. Supposing he burdens himself with a penniless girl, he adds to his expenses without augmenting his income ; the debt that he has contracted becomes heavier every day ; sooner or later he perceives that he has some money in his safe ; but it belongs to his clients. He borrows it, however, without saying a word, he resolves to tempt Fortune ; he knows a place where one may win large sums of money, he follows the crowd, he goes to the Bourse, and for a notary, M. Penouille, the Bourse is the antechamber of the galleys. See now to what one is exposed in taking a wife without a dowry."

Upon this Leopold Gandon rubbed his hands. He did not doubt for a moment that such a vigorous argument would move his future father-in-law.

"The young men of to-day," observed M. Penouille, are terribly practical, I, my young friend, married a penniless girl, and that did not prevent me from gaining a honourable position at the Tribunal of Commerce."

"You were not a notary ; you were an overseer. You founded your sugar refinery ; one cannot create a notary's practice ; the law absolutely forbids it. A manufacturer, a merchant, a barrister, or a doctor, can wed a girl without a dowry ; but it is a luxury forbidden to notaries."

"You shall never have my daughter," observed Mr. Penouille to himself. Gandon, perceiving that he did not answer, thought that he had converted him.

M. Cocheret arrived just as the dinner was ready. Had a thunderbolt fallen in the middle of the drawing-room, it would not have produced a greater effect. From time immemorial this family fête had always been celebrated by the members of the family alone ; no stranger, save Gandon, was ever admitted to it, and all knew that Gandon would not be a stranger for long. The dentist had got himself up in grand style. He wore a maroon coat with gilt buttons, grey

trousers with black stripe down the sides, and a white hat. His gloves were straw-colour, and his shoes of patent leather; his neckerchief reminded one of the rainbow, and his hair was daintily perfumed. He moreover displayed a gold scarabæus pin, gold studs in his shirt front, a gold watch chain across his waistcoat, and a tremendous ring on his finger.

In the midst of all this magnificence, he did not feel quite at his ease, as he was uncertain whether he was not the victim of some hoax. He was as red as a peony, and in looking for M. John Baptist Penouille, his eyes wandered about in a scared manner. He frightened the children; a little boy of six hid himself in his mother's lap, and his young sister began to cry. Pauline did her best to stifle her laughter, whilst Leopold remained perfectly serious. A sort of instinct warned him of the presence of a rival. As for M. Penouille, he advanced towards the new-comer in the style of a dancing-master; took him by the hand, led him up to his wife, and introduced him with these words: "Madame Penouille, I present to you a young friend of mine." He added in an undertone, "Place him next to Pauline."

The good lady quickly retired; it was necessary to add another knife and fork, to alter the cards that marked each person's place, to put the chairs closer together; what a fuss! Pauline generally sat between her maternal grandfather, aged eighty-four, and Gandon. It was out of the question to deprive the old gentleman of the vicinity and attention of his granddaughter; so it was Gandon who lost his seat. He was, however, placed opposite to Pauline, so that he should not think himself too much out in the cold.

"Whatever is Baptist thinking of?" muttered Madame Penouille as she busied herself in the dining-room. "But it does not concern me; he knows what he is about."

When the servant announced that dinner was on the

table, M. Penouille said solemnly to M. Cocheret, "Offer your arm to my daughter." Poor Gandon felt that the earth was slipping from under his feet. He turned quickly round and looked about for a woman or a girl whom he could take in with him ; but the company had already paired off into the other room, and he had to follow them, erect among some little children like a steeple in the centre of a hamlet. His arms hung piteously down when Madame Penouille showed him his new seat. He unfolded his napkin with a look of despair, he ate his soup in a passion. His eyes were fixed upon M. Cocheret like the two barrels of a gun upon some savage beast.

Gandon excepted, every one dined well. M. Cocheret only opened his mouth to eat, but his appetite gratified Madame Penouille as the most delicate compliment he could pay her. He offered every dish in succession to his fair young neighbour.

Pauline, who had ended by overcoming her desire to laugh, noticed Leopold's despondency. She was touched by it, and the friend of her childhood appeared to her more interesting full face than when seen sideways. She bestowed on him, by way of consolation, a smile more loving than sisterly, and of a kind till then unknown to Gandon. He returned it by a withering look directed straight at the dentist's head. She responded with a slight elevation of her shoulders that testified to her contempt for the stout gentleman by her side. They continued their silent conversation for some time, and in that way told each other many things about which neither of them had thought in the morning. Their new-born love suddenly burst forth among the warm dishes and the flower-laden centre-pieces, without upsetting anything in its rapid development, and their friends sitting by no more suspected the meaning of their glances than you and I decipher government despatches when we are passing near the telegraph

wires. The table was long and narrow ; so narrow, indeed, that at dessert Pauline's thin soled shoes left a trace of dust on young Gandon's pumps.

After the coffee, and whilst the young Penouilles were preparing some fireworks at the bottom of the garden, the prudent John Baptist, one of the seven sages of La Villette, said in confidence to M. Cocheret, "Sir, I possess a fortune of six hundred thousand francs. What do you think of my daughter?"

"She is magnificent, M. Penouille !" was the reply.

"Yet she has a great defect, no dowry !"

"The dentist made a frightful grimace which terminated in a smile. "Is it only that?" said he.

"Pauline is an only daughter. I shall not take my fortune with me into the other world ; she will therefore receive all. Meanwhile, however, I do not intend to despoil myself for any one. You must not think that vile selfishness influences my conduct. I spend nothing on myself. But my money invested in the manufactory brings me in twenty per cent. Suppose that I give a hundred thousand francs to my son-in-law—and I could do so easily—do you think that he would be able to invest them at twenty per cent? Land brings in two and a half ; stock, five ; the best railways, eight or ten ; but sugar gives twenty ! Young man, what do you think of my argument?"

"Sir, I have the honour to ask you for your daughter's hand."

CHAPTER III.

I AM positive that had M. Penouille's wine been less good M. Cocheret would never have propounded such an audacious proposition. Whilst asking for Pauline's hand he certainly stuttered a little. Was it timidity, or was it something worse? In truth, he had dined copiously ; and I know more than one coward who fears nothing when rising from a good dinner. M. Penouille, a man of sound sense, could not help comparing the dentist's conduct with the behaviour of the head clerk. The latter had known Pauline long enough to love her with a lasting love ; the former had just dined by her side for the first time. The one vegetated in an indifferent state in a corner of Maître Ledoux's office ; the other had a certain standing, a fine apartment, elegantly furnished, and his portrait painted by M. Dubufe. And yet the first one was not ashamed to value his hand at a hundred thousand francs, whilst the other was sufficiently disinterested to give himself gratuitously. M. Penouille, who was as upright as he was sagacious, considered it his duty to withdraw his esteem from young Gandon, and to bestow it on the generous Cocheret. He took his hand tenderly, but squeezed it so tightly that the dentist felt his great gold ring cutting the sides of his fingers.

"Young man," said M. Penouille, "my Pauline is yours ! You will not regret having married her without a dowry. Remember that if I give you nothing on your wedding day it is because all that I possess belongs to you. One day you

will have a splendid fortune ; meanwhile, if you are ever in want of help you will find me ready ! ”

At the time that this was taking place, the two lovers, whom one was not accustomed to watch, were seated side by side in the summer-house. They were telling each other their fears, abusing the interloper, and swearing eternal fidelity to one another. Their love was bursting from its chrysalis state, and audaciously spreading its wings. Their hands met and held each other fast. Their lips, that had never joined, united for the first time, as a Bengal light lit up the summer-house, and discovered to Madame Penouille's view a group that she had not arranged. Happily M. Cocheret and M. Penouille were not looking in that direction. Every one was very happy until eleven o'clock. Pauline and Leopold were murmuring softly that eternal duet, the words of which are so simple and the music so sweet, “ I love you.”

“ They love each other ! ” thought Madame Penouille, looking on complacently. M. Penouille, who was too serious to give his attention to the details of the fête, rubbed his hands together, and said to himself, “ I shall keep my money.” M. Cocheret saw shining on the horizon M. Penouille's gold.

At last the company began to withdraw. “ There is no pleasant party,” remarked M. Penouille, “ that Time's scythe does not separate at last. Cocheret, my good friend, I permit you to gather a kiss from my daughter's cheek.”

Pauline inclined her face forward in such a disagreeable manner that this kiss made Gandon but little jealous. M. Cocheret, who was approaching with his mouth puckered up, noticed the grimace. “ So much the better,” thought he. “ Strict principles, provincial education ; this one will never deceive me.”

Half an hour later, M. and Madame Penouille were reclining side by side in their twin beds ; “ Who is that gentleman ? ” asked Madame Penouille.

"My son-in-law!"

"Goodness gracious!"

"A man who has more than a hundred and fifty francs to spend daily, and who takes my daughter without a dowry. I have made a hundred thousand francs during the evening."

"And Gandon?"

"I formally desire that that name may never again be mentioned in my hearing; Pauline shall never marry a fortune-hunting individual, in love with my money. M. Leopold priced himself too high for me to desire to buy him."

There was a long pause. "But, my love," recommenced the worthy wife. A prolonged snore answered her. Is there a sweeter or more gentle music than the snoring of a father of a family about to marry his daughter without a dowry?

Madame Penouille was not even tempted to resist her husband; she considered his wishes to be the decrees of wisdom, but she paid rather a long visit to Leopold's parents. She told them of M. Penouille's strange resolution, that he was determined only to get rid of his daughter on condition of being allowed to keep his money. She hoped that the Gandons would take into consideration the love the two children had for each other, and that they would not sacrifice the young people's happiness to a question of money: after all, Pauline though without a dowry, was none the less a good match. Could one not wait a few years to complete the purchase of the practice? or, if one was determined to pay money down, was not M. Gandon rich enough to advance the amount?

"I am no richer than you," answered M. Gandon. "Why should I commit follies, when your husband refuses to do that which is just. Leopold has eighty thousand francs from his uncle; I give him a hundred thousand; it is a good round sum. M. Penouille says that his money brings him in twenty per cent; I have known years when mine returned

me twenty-five. It is true enough that trade is a better investment than the profession of a notary ; but, on the other hand, a manufacturer is never a notary's equal. I have sacrificed much for Leopold's education, because I wished him to be in a better position than myself. If M. Penouille does not understand that, he can keep his daughter ; we shall find no difficulty in marrying our son."

Madame Penouille wept eloquently, but her tears did not move the Gandons. She therefore went to work another way, and tried to cajole her husband : "I know that you are right," said she, "you are always right. But grant me, as a favour, Pauline's dowry. Oh, you profound thinkers, you are terrible men. For myself I understand nothing about business, but something tells me that my daughter's happiness is in Leopold's keeping."

"Do you consider my candidate bad-looking?" asked the sugar-refiner.

"I find him all right, my love, because you have chosen him ; but as Pauline loves another?"

"Patience! they will not have been married six months before she will quite have forgotten Gandon. I am experienced in the affairs of life, and a late judge of the Tribunal of Commerce is not likely to make a mistake."

Pauline and Leopold learnt at the same time that they were not to see each other again. Pauline only protested by her tears ; Leopold went at once to the factory, but M. Penouille was not at home for him. M. Cocheret was invited to pay his addresses. He met with no obstacles ; he had no suspicion of his rival's existence. Every evening he went to La Villette, Madame Penouille received him with forced politeness ; Pauline tried to expel him by her frigidity ; but M. Penouille was all warmth. It was he who put the bouquets presented by his future son-in-law in water.

When Leopold saw that M. Penouille was unrelenting, he

wrote to Pauline. He gave his letter in charge of the servant, who took good care not to betray him. All the household was on his side excepting the ferocious John Baptist. Pauline had not the courage to refuse him an answer; and it was thus the correspondence sprang up. At the end of a fortnight the lovers grew tired of shedding their tears on paper, and contrived a meeting. M. Cocheret left every evening at ten, and he had no sooner shut the street door behind him, than every one went to bed. On the 9th of July, at eleven o'clock, Pauline slipped out into the summer-house, and found Leopold there awaiting her.

M. Penouille, wise father and careful householder as he was, never forgot to let loose into his garden at night a terrible dog named Medor, with blood-shot eyes, strait ears, and bristling coat. This monster of fidelity took its master's interests so much to heart, that it would have devoured a burglar in two mouthfuls. Even in full daylight, chained up in its kennel, it showed its teeth to all strange calves. M. Cocheret passed but once within its reach, nevertheless his imprudence cost him a pair of tronsers worth forty-five francs. On the other hand, the brave animal delighted in licking the hands of Leopold, whom it had known while yet a puppy.

When Medor's memoirs see the light we shall know exactly what took place during the ten or twelve meetings that he embellished with his presence. As for me, I believe that Leopold scrupulously respected his dear Pauline, for he did not entirely despair of marrying her. He had obtained some information concerning the dentist, which was not to that gentleman's credit. He had been told, among other things, that M. Cocheret earned little, spent much, and was in debt with every one. He wrote to M. Penouille to inform him of his discovery, but the judicious sugar-refiner was long since of opinion that it never does to convict a man upon the evidence of his enemies: he therefore tore the letter up.

About this time M. Cocheret sent some magnificent presents to his intended bride, which the experts of the family valued at eight or ten thousand francs. Pauline examined the Indian shawl, the lace, the dresses, and the jewels with painful curiosity. All these lovely things, which would have charmed her had they come from another, greatly saddened her. She had as sore a heart-burn as a Brittany conscript has at the sight of a uniform. These dresses were the livery of the master that they were forcing upon her. M. Penouille, on the contrary, was radiant. He took his son-in-law aside and whispered to him: "Young man, you have deceived me!" Cocheret turned pale, and mumbled a reply.

"Yes," continued the sugar refiner, "you have deceived me. There is something that you have not told me."

"I—do—not know—sir—," murmured the dentist.

"You have hidden from me the state of your affairs."

"But, sir—"

"You never told me that you had already managed to economise."

"Oh!--ah!" stammered M. Cocheret, who expected something very different.

The next day the marriage contract was signed; it was a fête for every one excepting Pauline. Flowers had been placed in the drawing-room, and the garden walks had been carefully rolled and swept. M. Penouille had drawn up with Maître Ledoux a contract worthy of the golden age.

"My children," said he, with tears in his eyes, to the betrothed, "neither of you have any fortune. Stanislas Cocheret brings work and talent, Pauline Penouille, order and economy; you will be married under the system of legislative dispositions, by which husband and wife enjoy their common property between them. You will have to bear together, as the code says, the pains and pleasures of life. It is thus that I did with Madame Penouille, and we have

saved six hundred thousand francs, which will be yours some day."

"May that day be far off," piously added M. Cocheret. Pauline cried piteously. The whole Penouille family, assembled for the solemnity, murmured softly like the chorus in antique tragedies: "He is strong; he marries his daughter without a halfpenny of dowry." At midnight, in the midst of profound darkness, Leopold and Pauline, before Master Medor, formed an audacious plan which was to unite them indissolubly together. It was agreed that on the day following, at the same time, Pauline should leave her home. Once she was compromised, her father would have to give her to her lover, for no man would be found disinterested enough to marry her then without a dowry.

But the following day, as M. Penouille took his morning stroll, his observing mind perceived that several pieces of broken glass were missing from the top of the garden wall. This astonished him all the more, owing to the fact that two stoutly-heeled boots had left their impression in the middle of a flower-bed. He followed the accusing traces along the pathway up to a certain stone bench in the summer-house. The boots went no farther than here, but M. Penouille's eyes were too good not to observe the mark of a pretty little low-heeled shoe, which appeared to have stood for some time at the same spot. Following the marks made by the small shoe brought him to the window of Pauline's room. The father thought that the young girl would be much better on the first floor near her parents, and he had her things moved there at once. He did more; he pushed forward the wedding preparations, and eight days after, Pauline exchanged her father's name for that of M. Cocheret. It was not without shedding severe tears; but M. Penouille knew that a bride's tears always dry up in the course of the evening.

The wedding breakfast was splendid, and all the little

Penouilles were ill in consequence. Champagne was served immediately after the soup. Madame Penouille had a headache which prevented her doing the honours as well as she might have done. As to the sugar refiner he was everywhere, he filled again and again the glasses of his guests : "Drink my wine," cried he, "drink plenty of it, do not spare it, you will never drink a hundred thousand francs worth." And every one laughed. M. Cocheret, as red as a lobster, never said a word, no one would ever have taken him for a dentist. Pauline kept her eyes fixed on her plate.

M. Penouille had taken care to invite his son-in-law's landlord and the principal tradespeople to whom he had been for information. After the breakfast, he laid hold of M. Torlottin, walked him into a corner of the drawing-room, and said : "Would you have believed this six weeks ago ? To think that on the 23rd of June at 8 o'clock in the morning, I did not even know my son-in-law's name ! I am a sharp business man, as M. Lobeau, president of the Tribunal of Commerce used to say, sharp but circumspect, my dear M. Torlottin, I know to whom I give my daughter."

"I also," said the landlord.

"Great talent, is it not so ?"

"Immenso."

"A good reputation !"

"Magnificent."

"That man is worth five hundred thousand francs."

"At least."

"Well ! guess what he costs me."

"Half ?"

"Not a farthing, sir, I have married my daughter without a dowry."

"The deuce !" exclaimed M. Torlottin, as though he had trod on an asp.

"Is it not well played ? You will however understand

that on the day that Cocheret wants a few bank notes, he will find them here."

"Oh! you reassure me."

"What do you mean? have you lent him money?"

"Never."

"I was sure of it."

"He only owes me two years' rent."

"What! you have given him credit for eight quarters' rent?"

"I was guaranteed by his furniture."

"And you told me that he was an honest man?"

"The most upright man in the world may be hard up. One sets oneself straight, trade gets better, one marries."

"But he has earned over a hundred thousand francs in two years!"

"Oh! if you are sure of it!"

"I am certain—I am certain—Is he then bully off?"

"I have never questioned him on the subject; but what does it matter? you are rich, M. Penouille, and you would not like your daughter to be a widow for the benefit of the debtors' prison at Clichy."

"Not another word, sir, here is my wife."

M. Penouille received, during the ensuing fortnight, six or seven formidable bills, which he settled, after having tried to reduce the totals. Even M. Cocheret's valet came in livery and claimed two years' wages. The worthy man lost patience. The sums he had disbursed amounted to ninety thousand francs. He noted all the details in his pocket-book, and went straight to the house on the boulevards. M. Cocheret was out; Pauline was crying in an arm-chair. She complained that the Paris air did not agree with her, and asked to spend the end of the summer at La Villette. When in the midst of her disclosures, a vigorous tug at the bell interrupted her.

"It is a patient," said M. Penouille. "How is it that your husband is not here!"

Fortunately it was only a collector from the establishment known as the "Statues de St. Jacques," who came to request payment for the wedding presents amounting to ten thousand francs. M. Penouille promised to see to it.

A month later, he met Leopold Gandon in the Faubourg Saint Martin. The young man saw him coming, and discreetly avoided him, by looking into a shop window. But M. Penouille, so just and fair, tapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Why do we never see you, my dear Gandon? You neglect your friends. My wife was only asking me yesterday, 'Have you seen Gandon?'"

"What do you expect of me?" said Gandon with a deep sigh, "I was not rich enough to marry her without a dowry."

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